4-6-1

Library of Congress.

Chap. BT 890
Shelf .A6
Copyright No.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Recorded
March 3. 1837 at the
Clerks Off. of the South
Dist of New York.

Rec'd of the Dep'ty
March 7th 1837.

383

RECOMMENDATIONS.

HAVING had the privilege of perusing, in MS., Mr. Adam's Discourses on "THE MILLENNIUM," I am of opinion that they present, in an attractive form, a sober, scriptural, and lucid view of the prospects of the Church of Christ in our world in the ages to come; and are well calculated to elevate the tone of Christian piety, to animate prayer, and to give intensity to Christian zeal and effort in promoting the cause of God and man.

The Discourses furnish evidence of a sound and clear mind, and of well-disciplined and sustained thought; and will prove a valuable addition to the library of every Christian family to which they may gain admission. The impressions on the subject of the latter day glory are in general altogether too vague upon the public mind, and we are too much inclined to look for its introduction rather by miracle than in the use of any regularly instituted means.

The Lectures before us, we believe, place the subject in its true light. They have my hearty commendation.

JOHN KNOX.

New-York, Sept. 29, 1835.

I have looked over the MS. of the Rev. Mr. Adam, containing his Discourses on "THE MILLENNIUM." I am much pleased with the train of discussion, and the spirit and manner in which it is conducted. I fully accord with the recommendation of Dr. Knox, and should be pleased to see the Sermons published, and patronized by the religious public.

THOMAS DE WITT.

New-York, Oct. 3, 1835.

I have examined the MS. of the Rev. Mr. Adam on "THE MILLENNIUM" as carefully as the time allotted to me would permit; and I do cordially unite with Dr. Knox and Dr. De Witt in earnestly recommending these Discourses to the Christian public. The style is well adapted to the subject of discussion: the Discourses are luminous and truly scriptural. And as they exhibit a full exposition of a topic of Christianity that has been engaging, and does still engage the deep attention of every Christian, I feel a confidence that they need only to be fully known in order to be extensively patronized.

W. C. BROWNLEE.

New-York, Oct. 9, 1835.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Rev. Mr. Adam has been pleased to submit to my inspection the MS. of his Discourses on "THE MILLENNIUM." I have perused it with as much care as the pressure of other duties would permit, and am happy to say that the view taken of the subject has my entire approbation. The various topics introduced are discussed lucidly, and with no ordinary ability; and it appears to me that the publication of these Discourses will greatly subserve the interests of revealed truth, and cannot fail to be acceptable to the religious community.

J. M'ELROY.

New-York, Oct. 15, 1835.

Having hastily looked over the Discourses of the Rev. Mr. Adam on "THE MILLENNIUM," I think they will be useful—and therefore cordially unite in the foregoing recommendations.

THOS. M'AULEY.

GARDINER SPRING.

THE

MILLENNIUM;

BEING

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

ILLUSTRATIVE OF ITS NATURE, THE MEANS BY WHICH IT WILL BE INTRODUCED, AND THE TIME OF ITS COMMENCEMENT.

17 0006

BY REV. M. T. ADAM.

1871

NEW-YORK:

ROBERT CARTER, 112 CANAL STREET.

MDCCCXXXVII.

BT890
A6

[Entered according to the Act of Congress of the United States of America, in the year 1837, by Robert Carter, in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New-York.]

3000

New-York:
Printed by Scatcherd & Adams,
No. 38 Gold Street.

TO THE

CHRISTIAN YOUTH

OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

THE Author begs the pleasure of dedicating the following Discourses as a mark of unfeigned affection, and of earnest desire that they may be eminently instrumental in introducing the happy days of which they treat.

PREFACE.

In presenting the following Discourses to the Christian public, it may not be unnecessary for the writer briefly to state the object which he has principally in view by them. This object may be stated to be two-fold; to communicate correct views of the important subject which is here brought under discussion, and to stimulate and encourage the Church to make those exertions which are absolutely necessary in order to the introduction of the latter day glory. How far he has succeeded in the execution of his design he must leave his readers to determine. To the mind which is accustomed to weep over the woes of our world, the subject cannot but appear as sublimely interesting, and worthy of far more attention than it has ever yet attained; to it, therefore, he would earnestly solicit the attention of every follower of Jesus, and ever well-wisher of man.

The accurate observer of the present state of the civilized world cannot fail to perceive that it is every where in a strange state of convulsion. The old established system of things is evidently breaking up; and the human mind has obtained an ardour in its investigations, and a fortitude in its efforts, which neither tyranny nor superstition can long resist. If the Church is only faithful in the discharge of her duties to the world, this state of mind is full of promise with regard to the future. But if she neglects these, or brings to their performance only a fee-

ble, inconstant, and ill-directed energy, to the mind which is under the influence of correct views of the Divine government, it will not appear a matter of surprise if she should yet have to pass through days of adversity and suffering. Self-interest, therefore, as well as a sense of duty, should lead us all to take a tenfold deeper interest in supporting the cause of Christ than we have ever yet taken. For, never let it be forgotten, that it is the principles of Christianity alone, embodied into the institutions, breathing in the spirit, and moulding the characters of a people, which can exalt them. Yes; if the world is ever to be saved from its ignorance, its tyranny, its crimes, and its woes, it is Christianity alone which can accomplish this deliverance for it. And in order that it may be able to do this, it must be exhibited in its purity and power, and be accompanied by the all-pervading influence of the Spirit of God. Let me entreat, then, every disciple of Jesus into whose hands this work may come, to study to attain a greater measure of conformity to his will, and to have all that he has, as well as all that he is, consecrated to his service; that he may contribute his portion of effort and sacrifice necessary to introduce that happy period when "all nations shall be blessed in Christ, and all shall call him blessed."

There is one topic, however, in connexion with this subject, in reference to which—owing to the great importance which is attached to it by some—it may not be unnecessary to make a few remarks; I allude to what is generally called the personal reign of Christ upon the earth. This view of the Millennium, though as old as the third century, and though it has been frequently shown to be without any real foundation in Scripture, has been lately introduced to the notice of the Christian public by a class of writers on the subject of prophecy, who are distinguished in no small degree for the ardour of their feelings, and the air of certitude with which they have announced their views or discoveries. The

sum of their views of the Millennium may be briefly stated thus. After the destruction of Antichrist the Saviour is to make his personal appearance, in great power and glory, in Jerusalem, and to raise to life those who have died in the faith of the Gospel, who are to continue and reign with him upon the earth, in the possession of the greatest honours and the highest delight for a thousand years. The passage on which they principally rest for support in this view of the subject, is Rev. xx. 4—6. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Respecting this passage we remark, 1. That the resurrection here spoken of is a resurrection of *souls*. 2. That they who are represented as honoured with it are only those "who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," during the reign of Antichrist. 3. That if this passage is understood literally, and Christ should descend and reign personally on earth, then all his people, except those who were thus beheaded for their fidelity to his cause, are to be deprived of his presence for a thousand years; a supposition which appears to my mind to be so contrary to all the anticipations of the believer, and the Scriptural representations of the felicity and exercises of heaven, that it is only necessary to mention it to lead every reflecting mind to see that this cannot be the meaning of the passage. The mistake on this subject, into which

the writers to whom we here refer have fallen, seems to have arisen from the want of due attention to the description which John here gives of this resurrection, when he says, "I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded." This, on the supposition that their bodies were raised, appears to me to be altogether inexplicable language; and that we are to understand it literally, as we are in our present state destitute of all power or sense by which we can perceive a soul, seems to me to be wholly incredible. The phraseology, it must be admitted, is peculiar; but in attending to the description which is given of John the Baptist, we shall obtain, I apprehend, the principle by which we shall be led to a right understanding of it.

By the prophet Malachi, ch. iv. 5, the forerunner of Christ was described as Elijah. "Behold," says God, "I will send you Elijah the prophet." In Matt. xi. 14, the Saviour expressly tells us that the person here referred to was John the Baptist. But John, we know, was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. What, then, can be the meaning of the language that he was Elijah? Not, certainly, that he was the same identical person; but merely that he possessed the high intellectual and spiritual excellencies, and the heroic devotedness in the service of his Lord and Master, for which that prophet was so eminently distinguished. When John, then, says that during the Millennium he "saw the SOULS of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, &c." he means this, we apprehend, to be understood merely as a description of the character of the believers who shall live during that age; and intends to intimate to us, that as the martyrs were distinguished for eminent piety, and had their hearts, and lives, and all, devoted to the service of the Redeemer, so then his followers will be all equally devoted to him. There will be no half-hearted nor worldly-minded Christians in that period; but, like the martyrs, the cause of Christ will be *every* thing to them.

And as to its being said that they shall reign with Christ during that happy period, it means, I apprehend, nothing more than what Daniel had said long before, when referring to the same state of things, ch. vii. 27. "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." The kingdom of Christ is entirely spiritual; and during the Millennium it is to extend over the people of all lands; and to intimate to us that his people will no longer be an oppressed and degraded people, they are here represented as presiding over the administration even of the civil affairs of their respective countries. And this is all, so far as we have been able to discover from the sacred Scriptures, that is intended by the martyrs' reigning with Christ during the Millennium.

In addition to what has been stated with the view of elucidating the above passage, it may be remarked that the Scriptures speak only of two comings of Christ. The first took place at his incarnation; the second is that which is referred to in Heb. ix. 28, 1 Thes. iv. 15—17, John v. 28, 29, Matt. xxv. 31—, 2 Thes. i. 7—10, and other passages. This coming of Christ is evidently to take place at the close of the present system of things, *when all that are in their graves* shall hear his voice and come forth to judgment; after which *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.*" 2 Pet. iii. 10. The resurrection of ALL the dead, and the final judgment, are represented as taking place immediately on this advent of Christ; a circumstance which furnishes strong corroborative evidence of the accuracy of the views which we have here given on this subject. But whilst we would thus endeavour to turn away the faith and

hope of the Church from all expectation of any advent of Christ till he comes to judgment, let all the disciples of Christ fix them firmly on that sure word of prophecy which we possess, with regard to those times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which will revive pure and undefiled in every heart, and make Zion to break forth on the right hand and on the left, till the whole world shall redound with the Redeemer's praise. And in place of trusting to the splendours of his personal appearance to accomplish the conversion of the world, let us be found faithful, in obedience to his own command, in the use of the appointed means to put the world in possession of the Gospel; for thus, and thus only, can we reasonably expect the latter day glory to be introduced.

New-York, Oct. 9th, 1835.

INDEX.

PAGE.

DEDICATION to the Christian youth of America. . . . 3

Preface. 5

DISCOURSE I.

The distinguishing features of the Kingdom of Christ. John xviii. 36. 1

DISCOURSE II.

The universal diffusion of the Gospel. Is. xi. 9. . . . 16

DISCOURSE III.

Eminent holiness of Christians during the Millennium. Is. lx. 21. 36

DISCOURSE IV.

Union of the Church during the Millennium. Jer. xxxii. 39. . 53

DISCOURSE V.

Universal peace during the Millennium. Is. ii. 4. . . 75

DISCOURSE VI.

General happiness of mankind during the Millennium. Is. lxv. 18, 19. 95

DISCOURSE VII.

Preaching the Gospel, the instrumental means by which it is to be introduced. Mark xvi. 15. 117

DISCOURSE VIII.

Judgments which are to be poured out on the kingdoms of this world, as introductory to the Millennium. Heb. xii. 26, 27. . 136

PAGE.

DISCOURSE IX.

An abundant and universal effusion of the Holy Spirit, is to precede and introduce it. Joel ii. 28. 153

DISCOURSE X.

On the downfall of Antichrist. Rev. xviii. 21. . . . 171

DISCOURSE XI.

On the calling of the Jews. Rom. xi. 25, 26. 190

DISCOURSE XII.

On the time of the commencement, and the duration of the Milnium. Rev. xx. 1—3. 208

DISCOURSES.

DISCOURSE I.

THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

JOHN xviii. 36. My kingdom is not of this world.

CORRECT views of the nature, constitution, and design of the Church, are of immense importance for securing the purity and promoting the prosperity of religion. Hence the subject, though by many greatly neglected, is justly entitled to serious consideration from every professed disciple of Jesus. For, just in proportion as our views harmonize with those of the Redeemer concerning it, so are we likely to enjoy his presence in the ordinances of the Gospel, and to be honoured by him to extend the reign of righteousness and truth in the earth. And as no genuine follower of Christ, nor friend to man, can be indifferent about this, particularly in these days of Christian enterprize, so no one, who directs his mind properly to the subject, can fail to see that all our efforts to the attainment

of this object, if we would have them formed so as to reach it, must be founded on correct views of the kingdom of Christ.

In referring to the Old Testament representations of the Messiah, we find many allusions to him as a King—an important branch of his official character, which was greatly misunderstood by many of his friends, and greatly perverted by his enemies, as we find it was on the occasion on which he made the declaration of the text. For, with the view of the more effectually securing his condemnation, it was made the ground of a special accusation against him; as if, in the exercise of his kingly authority, he meant to rescue his country from the dominion of the Romans, and raise an opposing and victorious power against their conquests. But, with all the frankness of a mind that is a stranger to dissimulation, he replied to the interrogatories of his judge, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Thus plainly admitting the truth of the accusation, though in a very different sense from that intended by his accusers. For they thought and insinuated that he was an ambitious impostor, desirous of raising himself to earthly distinction amongst his fellow-countrymen and the surrounding nations; but far different was the honour that he sought, and the distinction to which he laid claim. No worldly ambition agitated his bosom; no scheme of fading greatness entered into his designs; for the kingdom, of which he was, and still is, and ever will be, the head, "is not of this world."

As it is our intention to deliver a series of discourses to you on the subject of the Millennium, or the universal diffusion and triumphant influence of the Gospel over the whole world, before proceeding to this, we have thought that it may serve an important purpose, as an introduction to it, to point out the distinguishing features of the kingdom of Christ. By the phrase, the kingdom of Christ, we mean the New Testament Church. For, though in one sense his empire is co-extensive with the universe, yet the sphere of the operations of his grace is limited to the Church, which, as distinguished from his Providential, is on this account denominated his Mediatorial kingdom: and it is to this that he referred when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Our object in directing your attention to these words on the present occasion, will be to point out wherein this kingdom differs from the kingdoms of this world. And here we remark that it is different,

1. In its designs. The objects which the Church is designed to attain and promote are exceedingly grand and important, being nothing less than the glory of God and the salvation of man; and, separate or apart from her, we know not how these can be secured in this lower world. For though all nature around us, and the heavens above us, declare or manifest the glory of God, yet they do this passively, and only imperfectly —for the full name or character of God cannot be manifested in the material universe. God is a spirit; and it is in spiritual beings and spiritual excellence alone that his glory can be fully displayed. Now, as the Church, in her genuine members, consists only of the excellent of the earth—those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without

blemish and without spot—and who have been renewed in the spirit of their mind, so that they bear the image of the heavenly, as well as the image of the earthly, in the spiritual excellence with which they are adorned, they reflect the character of God far more than all the splendour of the sun, or the glory of a nocturnal sky. The service, too, which this spiritual excellence enables them to render to him, constitutes an active display of his glory before the rest of mankind; for every thing they do, they do it that God may be glorified; so that they appear here as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light."

And as it regards the salvation of men, separate or apart from her, we know of no way by which it can be secured. For it is by her alone that the means of salvation are possessed; hence she may be called the light of the world—a city set on a hill—and from her the word of salvation is to sound forth even to the ends of the earth. But such objects as these fall not within the range of the designs of the kingdoms of this world. The glory of God is not made the first—seldom even a prominent object—and is generally not designed at all by them. The lives and the property of men, and self-aggrandizement or ambition are, generally speaking, the only objects which they regard. And it must be confessed that the only appropriate sphere of worldly kingdoms is to regulate the intercourse between man and man in worldly affairs, and to leave spiritual matters to be regulated entirely by the word of God; and whenever the State

steps out of this sphere, and interferes in these matters, it is always out of its place, and trampling upon the authority and office of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the only Lawgiver in Zion. Thus, in their designs, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world are very different.

It is different,

2. In its laws and sanctions. It is a principle which scarcely admits of debate, that all the laws which are of force in the kingdom of Christ come from himself, and extend to the heart as well as to the outward conduct. Hence his subjects, when true to their principles, and animated with his spirit, have ever been ready to say of him, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us." Yes, as the only King and Lawgiver to his people, he claims the heart to be surrendered to him in supreme love and universal obedience; every imagination of the heart is to be brought into a state of subjection to him; and whenever human authority stands opposed to his, he is ever to be obeyed rather than man; for his claims upon us, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Judge, admit of no competition, and must take precedence of, and even qualify every other. And as the conscience is amenable to him alone, it belongs to him, as its Lord, to lay down the laws by which it is to be guided in all its relations and transactions; and between it and him no human power has a right to interfere. Hence, in reference to the Church, it is said that she is "founded on the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles"—holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—"Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." But, in reference

to the kingdoms of this world, their laws are all professedly of human origin—are enforced by temporal considerations—have respect merely to the outward actions of men—and can in no respect bind the conscience, except in so far as they accord with the letter or spirit of the laws of God; for the human heart, and the eternal destinies of men, fall not within the range of human legislation. But the kingdom of Christ, as it is not of this world—as it is a rule or dominion over the minds of men—and as its great object is to bring the heart under the authority and will of God, directs its chief attention to it; so that its laws and sanctions go infinitely both beyond and above those of all earthly kingdoms.

It is different,

3. In the character of its subjects. Of all human beings, it may be said that they are the fit and proper subjects of the kingdoms of this world; but whilst all may be, yet all are not, actually fit to become the subjects of the kingdom of Christ. For it is the peculiar glory and honour of his kingdom that he reigns over a willing people—those who are genuine believers in him, who are partakers of his grace, and joint heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance. Hence, in order to an introduction to the kingdom of Christ, it is absolutely necessary that we should be born again; for without this, he himself has told us, that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Hence all his subjects are such as are born of God, and therefore bear his image, and are separated in their principles, character, and pursuits, from the rest of the world. And hence, too, they are said to be a "peculiar people, the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto

good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Their lives are therefore adorned with spiritual excellence—the spring, and motive, and end of all with them, is Christ—themselves indeed, and every thing they have, are consecrated to his service; and their ruling desire is, that he may be magnified in their soul and body, whether it be by life or by death. So long, therefore, that they continue here, they regard themselves as but pilgrims and strangers; hence they do not view earth as their rest, but "look out for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" and whilst at home in the body, they regard themselves as absent from the Lord; so that they "labour that, whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him." Far different, however, is the character of those who are merely the subjects of the kingdoms of this world. They have never fled to lay hold upon him as the only hope that is set before us; they have therefore no interest in his grace—are not devoted to his service, but are the slaves of sin and Satan, and the enemies of God by wicked works. So far, also, as it regards life, its end is never seriously contemplated, nor do they make any preparation for eternity or the coming judgment. The world contains their all, and the narrow span of life bounds their desires, their hopes, and their ambition. But the subjects of Christ's kingdom are holiness unto the Lord; and, by dying "daily unto sin and living unto righteousness, and by looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God," they live and act for eternity. Thus, as to the character of its subjects, the kingdom of Christ is vastly different from the kingdoms of this world.

It is different,

4. In its means of support and defence. In attending to the history and proceedings of the kingdoms of this world, how often do we find that they have recourse to a variety of means in order to support and defend their interests, which are altogether inadmissible in the kingdom of Christ. Thus, what cunning and duplicity, injustice and oppression, and cruel and bloody wars have they often practised and carried on in support and defence of what they considered their own interests? But the kingdom that is not of this world can never be supported or defended by such means. Compulsion, in every degree and form, is expressly prohibited; and the only means which are appointed for its support, defence, and extension, are instruction, and the holiness and zeal of its subjects. Yes, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; the only one, indeed, which the Christian is permitted to wield against his enemies, is "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." And even in the use of this he is ever to imitate the example of him who has said, "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." The shout of the warrior, and garments rolled in blood, may do very well for him who is only a subject of the Prince of this world, and who only seeks after an earthly crown; but they are quite inconsistent with the character of him who is a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus—who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save; and who has commanded his disciples merely to preach the Gospel to

every creature, and so to cause their light to shine before men, as that, seeing their good works, they may be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven. And even when evilly intreated, they are not to act on the principle of retaliation or revenge, but contrariwise; they are to give blessing for cursing, to do good to them who hate them, to pray for them who despitefully use them and persecute them, that they may be the children of their Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Or, as the sentiment is expressed in the Divine command by the pen of the Apostle Paul, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head;" that is, such kindness will melt down his obstinacy and enmity, and convert him into a friend of the truth. Thus, also, in reference to the means of its support and defence, this kingdom is altogether unlike the kingdoms of a present world.

It is different,

5. In its honours, rewards, and punishments. The kingdoms of this world, in order to allure to obedience and devotedness, and to deter from the commission of crime, have their honours, rewards, and punishments; but they are all earthly, and often uncertain, and terminate for ever at death. They are seldom, also, a mark of true greatness of character, or justly awarded; and even when enjoyed, seldom contribute to the happiness of the individual who possesses them. And as to the punishments, however terrible they may appear to flesh and blood, yet, if the mind is possessed of a conscience void of offence towards

God and man, it can bear them with unshaken fortitude, and even come off more than a conqueror through him who has loved us. But far different are the honours, rewards, and punishments of the kingdom of Christ; for these have respect chiefly to the soul, and consist in the abundant communication of spiritual blessings; in the enjoyment of the favour and friendship of God; in the society and friendship of angels; in admission into heaven; and the obtaining there a crown of life for ever and ever. And as its honours and rewards are exalted and blessed, so its punishments are proportionately awful and agonizing; for they are the wrath of God, descending upon his enemies for ever and ever. Thus their nature and endless existence communicate to them an importance, and grandeur, and awfulness infinitely greater than can be connected with any thing springing from the kingdoms of a present world. For what are all their honours and rewards, if we must take farewell of them at the grave? And what are all their punishments to the righteous, but a fiery chariot to carry them to their crown, and their never-ending joys? Or what are they, when contrasted with the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is never to be quenched? Well, then, may the subjects of this kingdom "not fear them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

It is different,

6. In its extent and duration. The kingdom of Christ, in this respect, so far surpasseth all the kingdoms of this world that they can bear no comparison with it. For even the greatest of them have compre-

hended but a small portion of the globe, and have been comparatively but of short duration. The kingdom of Christ, however, includes within its wide range the righteous of every age and of every country, from the murdered Abel till the last that shall be born of God upon earth. Going back to the announcement of the first promise to man for its commencement, it also looks forward to the consummation of all things as its end, when its great Head shall deliver it up to the Father, and God shall be all in all. And in tracing its ultimate extent by the light of prophecy, we find that it is to break in pieces and consume the various opposing kingdoms of the earth, and to include within it the whole family of man; for every knee upon earth is to bow down and worship him. His truth and spirit are to form the characters of all mankind; to diffuse their influence over every institution of society; and to unite all in one Faith, one Lord, and one Baptism. And thus, from the river even to the ends of the earth, his name is to be great, and in every place incense and a pure offering are to ascend to him. But, in contrast with this, what are all the kingdoms of this world? Where, for example, are the ancient empires of Greece and Rome, of Babylon and of Persia? Where are they? But, like their founders and their heroes, already long since numbered amid the wreck of things that were. The kingdom of Jesus, however, though at one time or another opposed and persecuted by all, has outlived, and will outlive, them all; and will go forth, conquering and to conquer, till there shall not be a tongue that is silent in his praise, nor a heart to be found in this wide world that will dare, openly at

least, to manifest its hostility against him: for he will break every enemy with a rod of iron, and shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; and then "shall he reign from the rising to the setting sun, and men shall be blessed in him; yea, all nations shall call him blessed."

By way of improvement, we remark:

1. That the kingdom of Christ is of a spiritual nature. This is the case in reference to the rule which he exercises over us; it has chiefly a respect to the soul—the objects and designs which he has in view by this kingdom, and the principles by which all his subjects are actuated. "Hence," said he on a certain occasion, "the kingdom of God is within you;" whilst the sentiment is farther illustrated by the Apostle Paul when he says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Yes, it is a dominion over the souls of men—it is the enthroning of God in the human heart—it is the bringing of every thing into a state of subjection to Christ—it is the communication of spiritual excellence to the soul—it is the filling of it with spiritual joy—and it is the raising of it to spiritual and heavenly honours. What an exalted kingdom then is this! and what a maring of its beauty and grandeur to mix up with it the policy and designs of this world! Heavenly and Divine in its origin, man cannot improve it; and supported and defended by omnipotence as it is, it defies all the powers of earth and hell to overturn it; and worldly policy never has been, and never will be, conducive to its interests. For as it is spiritual in its nature and ends, so it can be propagated only by spiritual means; and the more

spiritual they are, they are the more likely to be successful.

2. How important is the inquiry—are we subjects of this kingdom? As it is in this kingdom alone that the blessings of salvation can be enjoyed, so all who have no place in it are under the dominion of the God of this world, and are sitting in the region of the shadow of eternal death. And all who will not have Christ to reign over them here, can never enter into his kingdom above; for it is the Church on earth alone that supplies heaven with its redeemed inhabitants; and if we become not the subjects of the Redeemer whilst here, we can never become such hereafter. The inquiry, therefore, so far as we are concerned—as to whether we are subjects of the kingdom of Jesus—is one of infinite importance; for our present happiness and everlasting well-being are entirely dependent on this. O then, brethren, be entreated to examine yourselves as to whether you have been translated from the kingdom of Satan into that of God's dear son. And never forget that the seat of this kingdom is the soul itself, and that subjection to Jesus consisteth not merely in outward profession and appearances, which are generally all that man can require, as it regards the kingdoms of a present world. The heart is what the King of Zion asks, and complete and uniform subjection to all his laws. Try yourselves, therefore, by this test; and, aware that your eternal interests are at stake, see that you deceive not yourselves, but that you are in deed and truth subjects of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords—and such as he will acknowledge at last before his Father and the angels.

3. What just reasons have we for taking the deepest interest in the progress of this kingdom? Were this kingdom founded in oppression, or were it to be extended by fire and the sword, then every well-wisher of man would be compelled to exert his influence against it. But it is the very reverse of all this. For in place of oppression, its great object is to free us from the worst thraldom with which man can be afflicted, namely, the thraldom of sin and Satan. And whilst it brings the greatest possible glory to God from this lower world, its undoubted tendency is to promote peace upon earth and good-will amongst men. And if all the tribes and kindreds of men are ever to be united in friendship and love; if war, and tyranny, and oppression are ever to cease; if sin and misery are ever to be banished from the earth, and man rise to any elevated measure of purity and happiness; it can only be by the universal extension and all-pervading influence of the religion of Jesus. Infidelity, and science, and heathenism, have already done their utmost, without having been able to reclaim a single solitary village from its apostacy from God, or promote the moral improvement of a single country, or save a single soul. If the world, then, is ever to be saved, if its miseries are ever to terminate, it can only be accomplished by the kingdom of Jesus. Yes, infidelity and science have never reached, and never can reach, the seat of man's woes; as they can discover no way by which guilt can be removed from the soul. How earnestly, therefore, should every heart pray for the universal extension of this kingdom; and what a consecration of effort, of wealth, and of zeal to this subject should there be throughout the Church; for never

let us forget that it is the kingdom that is not of this world which is to accomplish the salvation of man! Come then, my brethren, let us mark well its progress; let us dedicate ourselves more entirely to its interests, that we may at last unite in the hallelujahs of a redeemed world, where all shall sing "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father, unto him be honour and dominion for ever and ever." "And he shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth; and all nations shall be blessed in Him, and all shall call him blessed."

DISCOURSE II.

THE UNIVERSAL DIFFUSION OF THE GOSPEL.

ISAIAH xi. 9. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

WHEN the mind reviews the past history of mankind, and reflects on the ignorance and idolatry, the crimes and oppression, which at one time or another have universally prevailed; or when it surveys the present state of by far the greatest portion of the globe; if there is any love to God or compassion to man in it, it cannot but shed a tear over the ruin and misery which sin has introduced. Nor can it, as it ventures to look into futurity, and to think on the many generations and the vast multitudes of men who shall come into existence between this and the closing scenes of the world, fail anxiously to make the inquiry—Is their future history to be only like the past? Are the ignorance and misery of men never to cease? Are justice, purity, and truth never to form the characters and guide the actions of men? Is God never to be loved, nor the Saviour known, by all the generations of men? Or, is the evil spirit to be permitted to perpetuate and extend his influence over our world, till the terrors and the flames of the judgment shall arrive? What mind is there, we say, that ventures to look beyond the narrow span which bounds its own

pilgrimage, and that feels for others' woes as it would that others should feel for its, that does not at the same time feel the deepest interest in such inquiries as these? And where is the eye that can be lighted up with joy that does not beam with gladness as it glides along the words of the text; or the ear that is delighted with melody, that is not enraptured when it hears that the united testimony of revelation is, that the future is not to be as the past history of man; that he is not to continue throughout all generations the ignorant and degraded being which we now generally find him; but that heavenly truth is to enlighten him—that the grace of the Saviour is to sanctify him —that the Gospel is to form the characters of men, and to regulate the intercourse of nations—and that a time is to come when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

You are aware of our intention to deliver a series of discourses on what is denominated the Millennium; and the first point which comes to be discussed, in the execution of our plan, is "The universal diffusion of the Gospel, or the universality of the Christian dispensation." But before proceeding to a consideration of this subject, it may not be out of place to state, that, by the Millennium we understand the complete and universal overthrow of the kingdom of Satan over the whole world, and the introduction of a long period during which every system of error and superstition shall perish from the earth, and Christianity be the only religion of mankind. In addition to these objects, some, indeed, include in it the personal reign of

Christ on the earth. But for this idea we can find no scriptural authority, except it be some figurative language which seems never to have been intended to be understood in a literal sense. When we, therefore, refer to the Millennium, we are not to be understood as giving any countenance to this idea.

In considering the subject that is at present to occupy your attention, let us, 1. Endeavour carefully to ascertain the Scripture doctrine as to the ultimate extent of the Gospel among the various nations of the earth. 2. Point out the striking adaptation of Christianity to become the universal religion of man.

I. Let us endeavour carefully to ascertain the Scripture doctrine as to the ultimate extent of the Gospel among the various nations of the earth.

As the future is wisely concealed from all human view, except in so far as God has been pleased to reveal it, so, for all our knowledge of futurity we must of course be indebted to Scripture prophecy—the great object of which is to make us acquainted with the purposes and designs of God concerning the Church and the world till the end of time. And on a careful examination of the Scriptures we shall find that a no inconsiderable portion of them consists of prophecy; a great part of which has been already fulfilled, and has thus laid an immoveable foundation for the belief that what is yet unfulfilled will assuredly be accomplished at the time which the Lord has fixed. In order, therefore, that we may see what are his purposes with regard to the Church in future days, we must endeavour to ascertain the purport of those which refer to this subject. In attending to these, we find they clearly foretell

1. That the Gospel will be theoretically known by all. In proof of this, the language of the text may be adduced as satisfactory evidence; for it evidently refers to New Testament times, and cannot be understood of any state of the Jewish Church, even in its most prosperous days. The whole passage, indeed, refers to the Messiah, and the happy effects produced by his Gospel on the minds of men. And in attending to his own prediction on this subject, we find him telling us that "this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." And in exact harmony with this, and in order to secure its fulfilment, is his command unto his disciples to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Daniel, also, when referring to the same period and the same subject, declares that "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;" and the result of all this exertion shall be, that "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills;" that is, the Christian Church shall obtain a prominency above every thing else; "and all nations shall flow into it;" so that no man shall have occasion to say to another, know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest. "Yea, the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be but one Lord, and his name one." "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense and a pure offering shall be offered unto my name; for my

name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."

From these passages, to which many others might be added of the same import, nothing can be more obvious, than that the Gospel shall be universally known over the whole earth. Just as the waters cover the channel of the sea, even so shall the knowledge of the Lord, and of his wonderful works for the salvation of man, cover the whole earth. Then there shall not be a country, nor an island, nor a family on the face of the globe that shall be destitute of the Gospel. And then "shall Christ have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." Every thing shall give way to the influence of his truth. His enemies shall be clothed as with a garment of shame, whilst upon himself shall the crown of universal empire flourish.

2. It will be *savingly* known by vast multitudes in all lands. "Ask of me," says the Father to the Son in the second Psalm, "and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And in virtue of this engagement of the Father to the Son, it is said that "all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." The Saviour, too, when referring to the ultimate effects of his death, and exaltation to his honours in heaven, said, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;" whilst the prophet declares that the Spirit, through whose influence it is that the kingdom of Christ is to be advanced, is to be poured out on all flesh; and the result or accom-

plishment of all this, is stated in the triumphant voices which John heard in heaven, saying, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." These, to which many other passages of similar import might easily be added, prove, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that at least vast multitudes in all lands shall be savingly converted to Christ; and that there shall not be a nation upon the earth that does not, in its national capacity, profess subjection to Him; so that every knee on earth, as well as every knee in heaven, may be said to bow down to him, and crown him Lord of all.

But though these prophetic descriptions leave us in no doubt as to the universal and triumphant influence of the Gospel in the latter days of the world, yet other passages seem to intimate that they are to be understood with some limitations. Thus the Saviour, when referring to the termination of all things and the ingathering of the redeemed to heaven, merely says that "many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;" whilst the prophet Isaiah, towards the close of the 65th chapter, in the whole of which he is treating of the Millennium, says, "there shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed." That is, we apprehend, that some may even then live on to the age of a hundred years, and die at last impenitent; so that, notwithstanding the happiness and spiritual joy which may universally prevail around them, they shall

die under some awful marks of the Divine displeasure. But, even admitting that there may be some solitary instances of impenitence, yet we have every reason to believe that they will form exceptions to the general rule, and that there will be no instances of gross and outward depravity. The current of public sentiment and example will all be in favour of the Gospel and genuine piety; so that the glowing description which Daniel gives of these days shall be amply fulfilled. "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." And then, too, shall be verified, to the fullest extent of its meaning, the triumphant description of the Psalmist: "His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."

3. It will be much more extensively and accurately known in its principles and spirit than it has ever yet been. In looking round on the Christian Church, it requires but little discernment to perceive that Christianity, both in its sublime doctrinal truths, and in its holy and active principles, is still—comparatively speaking—but little understood. The great body, indeed, of the professed disciples of Jesus are but children in knowledge, to whom may well be applied the cutting reproof of the Apostle—"For, when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong drink." Nor is it difficult to

account for this state of things. For, is it not a fact too flagrant to be denied, that, in reference to the great mass of the followers of Christ, Revelation is lamentably neglected as a branch of study; that almost every thing is preferred before it; and that the mind and pursuits of most are so altogether earthly, that it is absolutely impossible for them to make any great proficiency in the understanding of that which is so diametrically opposed to the current of their thoughts and the bent of their affections? Many of the divisions, too, which have unhappily taken place in the Church, and the wrangling spirit of controversy which has sprung out of them, have greatly hindered our progress in Divine knowledge, and in the spirit of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit also, through whose enlightening and sanctifying influence alone it is that we can make any real progress in the ways of truth and righteousness, has hitherto been greatly restrained in his communications, and resisted in his operations on the minds of men. But during the Millennial age, the very reverse of all this is to be the case; for religion is then to be the grand business of man—the Bible then will not be the neglected book that it is too often now—the pursuits and affairs of the world, in place of being, as they are now, the first, will be comparatively but little thought of; and the love of gain, which, as the Apostle tells us, "is the root of all evil," will no longer be the curse of the mind, as it cramps its energies and debases its affections. The Holy Spirit too, is then no longer to be restrained or resisted; but is to be poured out in the most copious effusions on the minds of men. With all these favourable circumstances, therefore, what progress in the

knowledge of Divine things, and in a practical conformity to the Spirit of Divine truth, will the people of God then doubtless make! What difficulties may vanish, and what obscurities may be cleared up, when all shall be light in God's light clearly! Such a delightful state of things, prophecy also evidently leads us to anticipate; for, when alluding to the state of the Church in the latter days, Isaiah—using natural imagery in order to illustrate that which is intellectual and spiritual—says, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun shall be seven fold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Yes, such will be the superior degree of knowledge then above what we now have, that it will be as if the light of the moon were to equal that of the sun, and as if the sun were to pour forth on the world as much light in one day as he now does in seven. What a delightful prospect is this, when ignorance shall have for ever fled away, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!"

Let us now consider,

II. The striking adaptation of Christianity to become the religion of the world.

1. Its doctrines, as they are of unspeakable importance to all, so they are capable of being understood and believed by all. Of all the subjects which can occupy our attention, there are none so important as those which Revelation either amplifies or reveals; and they are not only important, but are so clearly revealed, that all may understand them; and when understood, they cannot but appear as so just in reference

to God, and so reasonable and merciful to man, that all will be induced readily to believe them. For what a flood of light does it pour on the being, the nature, the character, the blessedness, the government, and the various relations of God to us; on the origin of man, his primitive state of rectitude and happiness, his apostacy from God, and his miserable condition as guilty and depraved; on the wondrous mediation of the Saviour for us, his astonishing humiliation in our world, and his suffering even the death of the cross that he might be the great atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world, his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the Father's right hand, and his interceding for us; on the method of our reconciliation with God through faith in the righteousness of the Redeemer, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; on the various duties and exercises of the Christian life; on the world to come, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment; on the blessedness of the righteous in heaven, and on the misery of the wicked in hell? Of what vast importance to mankind universally, are correct and saving views of all these; and how clearly are they stated in "the word of the truth of the Gospel!" For there, glorious though these truths are, yet they are brought down to a level with the capacities of all. So that, unlike various systems of heathenism which have prevailed, in the Gospel there are no mysteries which it is the peculiar privilege only of the learned to know; for to all, whether they be learned or ignorant, civilized or barbarous, bond or free, it speaks the same language—reveals the same truths—enjoins the same duties—offers the same Saviour—and points out the same method of salvation. Thus, in its very structure

it has respect to the common character of man; that is, that God has made of one blood, and has communicated the same capacities to all men who dwell on the face of the earth; so that if its announcements and disclosures are important to one, they are equally important to all; and if they are understood and believed by any, they may be so by all. In its very structure, therefore, it is evidently adapted to become the religion of all mankind.

2. Its blessings, as they are needed by all, so they are offered to all. The declaration of the word of God, that all, both Jew and Gentile, have become guilty before God – a declaration which is amply verified by the history of man in every age—presents the whole family of man as involved in one common ruin. All are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and are therefore children of wrath. All, therefore, without one solitary exception, stand in need of salvation, and exactly such a salvation as the Gospel offers; and for this salvation all have equally alike no claim. Under the Old Testament dispensation, for reasons which were infinitely wise and good, the knowledge of this salvation and the enjoyment of the means of grace were confined to a single nation; but under the Gospel, the wall of partition between it and the rest of mankind is entirely broken down, and the ambassadors of Christ are to go over the length and breadth of the world preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, and offering unto all alike freely, without money and without price, the blessings of salvation. As it thus points out Christ as the great and only remedy for the misery of man—telling us that there is no other name by which we can be saved than his—so its invitations

are addressed to all. Yes; in the language of universal application, it says to the whole family of man, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" —"In the last day, that great day of the feast, even Jesus himself stood and cried, saying, 'if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'" And, still further to illustrate this delightful feature of the Christian dispensation—"The spirit and the bride" —that is, the Holy Spirit and the redeemed in heaven— "say, come; and let him that heareth, say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The salvation of the Gospel is thus offered to all—is the common privilege of all. Like the light and the air of heaven, to which all have a right of equal access, so all may come to the healing waters, and take them freely and live. How conclusive, therefore, is this testimony, that Christianity is designed and adapted by God to become the universal religion of man; that her provisions and promises have respect to all; and that she seeks to number her disciples, without any distinction of clime, or colour, or kindred, or language, the inhabitants of all lands—that thus "the Father, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, may gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

3. Its ordinances are such as to be easily observed by all. This is another fact which strikingly shows the adaptation of Christianity to become the religion of the whole world. Under the Old Testament dispensation, the ordinances were such as could be observed only within the limits of the land of Judea; and many of them

only in Jerusalem itself; but under the Gospel, these local prescriptions are all done away, and God is represented as the God of the whole earth; so that "men may pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting—if haply they may feel after him and find him, for he is not far from any one of us." The forms of devotion are also few and inexpensive; and her chief ordinances are venerably plain and sublimely significant, and such as man can observe in every variety of situation in which we find him. For where is there a nation or a people that cannot support the preaching of the Gospel, or that cannot observe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Thus, in the total exclusion of every thing in the shape of worldly pomp and grandeur, and of all costly sacrifices from Christianity, and in the placing of all acceptable acts of worship in the sentiments of the mind, and in the purity, love, and reverence of the heart, we see that, in its ritual, it possesses a simplicity which is admirably adapted to the diversified circumstances of the family of man. Ordinances adapted to one country but not to another, to the learned and the wealthy as distinguished from the poor and illiterate, it has none. To all, it prescribes one common form; and wherever we are—whether it be on land or on the sea—there is not an ordinance of the Gospel which we may not, without inconvenience and without any burdensome expense, enjoy. How worthy, then, is the religion of Jesus of universal diffusion! With what Divine simplicity does it appear to be clothed when contrasted with all the gorgeous inventions of man under the name of religion! And how likely is it, when mankind become truly enlightened, to ap-

prove itself to every man's conscience, and to lead all to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and to abandon the unmeaning and costly pageantry connected with them, and come and be followers of the truth even as it is in Christ!

4. It is universally diffusive in its spirit. The spirit of the Gospel, unlike that of every system of worldly policy which has at any time prevailed, and far surpassing that of the Jewish dispensation, is, in the highest sense, the spirit of proselytism; or, in other words, whoever is made a partaker of the grace of Christ, will naturally desire and endeavour to bring all others to the enjoyment of the same blessing. We find this beautifully illustrated in the case of the primitive believers in Christ, who no sooner found rest and peace for themselves in him, than they carried the glad tidings to their relatives and friends around them; and in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who no sooner experienced the efficacy of Divine grace, and obtained an inheritance among them that are sanctified, than he began to preach the faith which he had formerly sought to destroy; so that he "showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Every genuine believer, indeed, becomes a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men; and in place of being satisfied with possessing the heavenly gift himself, he is so to cause his light to shine before men around him, that they, seeing his good works, may be led to glorify his Father which is in heaven. Like his Lord and Master, he is even to go about seeking to do good, by teaching the ignorant,

by reclaiming those that are out of the way, and by endeavouring to win all who may come under his influence, to Jesus. Nor is this all. The whole family of man is to share in his benevolent regards; and he is to long and to pray for the happy period, when the glad tidings of salvation shall be known unto all the dwellers on the earth; and means for the attainment of this object, whether they involve personal sacrifices or exertion, must be furnished. And if he is really a partaker of the grace of Christ, and of the hope of everlasting life, he will feel himself constrained to do this as much from sense of love to the Saviour, as from a feeling of compassion to his fellow men. His constant aim, indeed, is to live to Christ, and for Christ, and so as to promote the best interests of men. And knowing that these can never be secured, nor the glory of the Redeemer be promoted, without the universal diffusion of the Gospel, to this object he is willing to give himself, his life, his all. And, as illustrative of the delight which he feels in the extension of the Divine glory and in the happiness of man, he is ever ready to say, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen." Thus, whatever view we take of the Gospel —whether we consider it in its doctrines, its blessings, its ordinances, or its spirit—we must come to the conclusion that it is admirably adapted to become the religion of the whole world.

By way of improvement of this part of the subject, we may remark,

1. What a delightful prospect Scripture prophecy

affords us of the future state of our world. The plan of divine mercy, and the revelation of the divine will, which the Gospel contains, present us with the only means by which the miseries of our world can be healed. Hence, wherever they have been made known and received in purity and truth, the burden of sin has been removed from the conscience; its dominion has been broken in the heart; the love of God has descended; the peaceable fruits of righteousness have sprung up; and life, in place of ending in eternal death, terminates in the glory and blessedness of heaven. How delightful, therefore, must be the state of the world, when Christianity shall be universally known and felt in its power by all the tribes and kindreds of men! When ignorance, with all its concomitant crimes, shall cease, and idolatry shall no longer pollute the world and ruin the souls of men! When the wandering Tartar, the roving Indian, the debased and injured African, with the various nations of the Eastern world, shall be enlightened by the heavenly truths of the Gospel; shall be adorned with all its spiritual excellence; and shall therefore be holy, and happy, and free! When an ignorant and degraded character shall no where be met with; when scenes of vice shall no longer meet the eye nor pain the heart; when every one shall be striving who shall bring most honour to God and the Lamb; and when his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven! Who, that duly reflects on these things, does not rejoice at the happiness which awaits our descendants, and the generations of men who are far off; and does not long and pray for the introduction of these happy

days, and does not also anxiously inquire in what way we may be instrumental in introducing them?

Wherefore,

2. Let us endeavour, by all means accordant with the Gospel, to extend the knowledge of the Lord over the whole earth. And the very first way in which we can do this, is by believing the Gospel ourselves, and by imbibing, and on all occasions exemplifying, its pure, peaceful, and heavenly spirit; and by labouring, through our whole conduct, to contribute to the decisive ascendency of Christian principle over the maxims and customs of the world in the place where we dwell; throwing the whole weight of our influence, and that in all ways and on all occasions, especially by a holy and uniform example, into the scale of scriptural piety. And were every member of a church thus to act, how soon might ignorance and iniquity be banished from amongst us, and multitudes be induced to come and join themselves to the Lord in a covenant never to be forgotten. But when, in opposition to this, the professed followers of the Lamb conform to the world, and are proud, covetous, contentious, selfish, and as worldly-minded as those who make no pretensions to religion, how deep is the injury which is done to genuine piety, and to the cause and kingdom of the Redeemer? For if the world is to be renovated and made happy by the gradual diffusion of Divine truth, and the prevalence of the temper and conduct which that truth, when believed and felt, assuredly forms; then, to countenance the world, and to resemble it in its spirit and maxims, is to hinder the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the

earth. O that the disciples of Christ would keep this remark constantly in mind; and that they would endeavour in every thing to hold forth the word of life, and to shine as lights in the world. Particularly should parents, and all intrusted with forming the characters of the rising generation, bear this subject in mind; and use every means, and be unwearied in their efforts, to instil the knowledge of the Lord into their minds. And if I may be permitted to express an opinion concerning the tendency of the present system of education, I would say that it is by far too worldly; there is by far too little of the knowledge of the Lord in it; so that, if God does not in mercy interpose to prevent it, the rising generation is likely to grow up even more worldly-minded than the present. Parents, however, and all intrusted with the education of youth, should bear constantly in mind that they are bringing up children on whom may devolve the principal share of the exertion necessary to introduce the Millennium, and whose eyes and hearts may be blessed to see and enjoy the happy day, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the channel of the sea. Endeavour, therefore, by imparting to their minds this knowledge—by training them up in habits of entire devotedness to God, and of spiritual enterprise in seeking the best interests of men—to qualify them for this exertion, and to prepare them for this happiness. And whilst we have a heart to pray, or a hand to labour or to give, or a tongue to speak, never let us cease to take the deepest interest in the various plans which are now in active operation for diffusing the Gospel in all lands. Yea, as descriptive of the fixed resolution of our

hearts in connexion with the spiritual renovation of the world, let each of us now say, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

3. How inimical to the best interests of man must they be, who are the enemies of the Gospel. But who, you possibly may inquire, are the enemies of the Gospel? Such are all who deny its Divine authority, and oppose it. Such is every impenitent sinner; and such is every one who withholds his prayers, his efforts, and assistance to send it over the world; for "all who are not with me," says Christ, "are against me." Yes, every impenitent sinner is an enemy to Christ and his cause; and such, too, is every one who stands aloof, and takes no part in the efforts which are now made to extend his kingdom over the earth. And as both classes hinder its progress, and so far as their example and influence extend, prevent mankind from being blessed in Him, so are they to be ranked amongst the worst enemies of the human race. For, to be conducive in any way or measure to the ruin of souls, is the greatest crime of which we can be guilty. Be intreated, then, impenitent sinners, and all of you who have no heart to feel for the miseries of men, nor a hand to contribute in order to spread abroad the knowledge of the Lord, to lay this to heart. For in so acting, you are not only the enemies of God, but the enemies of the world. O, let the impenitent come then, and lay down his hostility to the Prince of Peace, and join his influence to that of those who are longing for the time when all the ends of the earth shall

see the salvation of God. And let those who have hitherto declined taking any part in the various plans which are in operation for the renovation of the world, be intreated to come up to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty; for in the day of final decision, and throughout the ages of eternity, it will be found that he who has contributed most, by his example, his prayers, and his efforts, to save the souls of men, has been the greatest benefactor of the world, and has risen highest in the honours and in the estimation of heaven.

DISCOURSE III.

EMINENT HOLINESS OF CHRISTIANS DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

Is. lx. 21. Thy people shall be all righteous.

To the mind that is truly enlightened to discern the beauty of holiness, and that can form a just estimate of the happiness to man and the glory to God which result from it, what a delightful object of contemplation must the ancient people of God have been, when "they were holiness to the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase:" And what a delightful state of things must have existed among the primiuive believers in Christ, when "they continued daily in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer, praising God, and having favour with all the people, and when great grace was upon them all." Religion or piety was then the great business of their lives; and it was piety, not merely in profession, but reality—for "great grace was upon them all." And such was the effect, which it produced even on those who continued destitute of it, that they manifested a peculiar regard to them on account of it; a circumstance which may lead the people of God clearly to see that the surest way to obtain the respect and esteem of the men of the world, is for them to live up to their profession, and "adorn the doctrine of God

their Saviour in all things." But such a state of things, holy and impressive as it was, presented only an epitome of the Millennial Church, and of the impression which genuine piety will then make on those who are destitute of the grace of God. For then the number of the disciples, when contrasted with those who were not of the household of faith, was exceedingly small; but during the Millennium, the great mass of mankind in all lands are to be numbered amongst the followers of the Lamb. Piety will then have the countenance of all, and be genuinely displayed by an immense majority of the human race. It will therefore carry every thing before it, and be the grand absorbing question, and the constant employment of men; for so universal and genuine will it be, that the state of the Church will then form a beautiful realization of the language of the text—"Thy people shall be all righteous." That it is of the Church in the latter days the Prophet is here speaking, cannot admit of a doubt in any mind that will attentively consider the preceding part of the chapter; and from this passage we propose to consider the eminent holiness of the people of God during the Millennial age. In considering this subject, let us, 1st, Briefly describe the nature of Christian holiness. 2d, Show in what respects it will manifest itself. 3d, Point out the authority of Scripture for leading us to anticipate that the Millennial Church will profess it in this eminent degree.

I. We are briefly to describe the nature of Christian holiness. By the term "holiness," we mean all that is included in piety, whether it relate to the sentiments of the mind—the affections of the heart—or the actions

of the life. And we remark, that it may be contemplated in a twofold light, viz. as it is displayed in conformity to the moral image of God, and in the exercise of entire dependence on Christ, and complete subjection to his authority, under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. And no form of piety which does not include both of these, can come up to the piety of the Gospel. Let us briefly view it then as including,

1. Conformity to the moral perfections of God. Piety, viewed in this light, implies that the sentiments which the mind entertains of every thing, harmonize with God's—that there is no discrepancy between them—but that we are entirely one with God in all our views and plans. And as an evidence of this oneness of heart with God, we delight in his laws—make them our rule of duty in all things—submit to his authority, and cultivate the exercise of every affection which can make us resemble God. For as our Heavenly Father is perfect, so are we, in all things, to study to be perfect. Not that we can ever equal in degree the various perfections which exist in his nature, or even attain to a complete resemblance to them—at least so long as we continue in a present state—but we are constantly to aim after it. Thus, as God is holy, so are we to be "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness." As God is just and true in all his ways, so are we also to be in ours. As the goodness and tender mercy of God are over all his works, so are we to study to have goodness and mercy exhibited in all ours. And as he is ever seeking the good of man, so must we also be ever actively employed in endeavouring to do good to all around

us. Thus, and thus only, can we manifest that we are "the children of the Highest;" for He is kind, even to the unthankful and the evil. Christian holiness or piety, therefore, is not merely a resemblance to God in his purity, but also in all his active benevolence to man. It is the cherishing of every affection, and the manifesting of every action which can illustrate the moral perfections of God in this lower world, and ultimately, through the operation of his grace, bring all to be like him.

2. The exercise of entire dependence on Christ, and complete subjection to his authority under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. Such is the present state and character of man, that there can be no piety in him but what springs from faith in the Lord Jesus, and from the operation of his grace in the heart. For though it was natural to man, so long as he stood in his state of innocence, yet, ever since his fall, sin has obtained the dominion over him, and has corrupted and deranged every faculty and affection of his soul; and the only way by which sin can be destroyed, and the soul be renewed after the image of God, and the various principles of piety be implanted in the heart and sustained in the life, is by Christ, "who is," for this purpose, "made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." But Christ never can become such to us unless the whole heart is submitted to him, and we are led to regard him as "the Lord our righteousness, our strength, and our Redeemer." And, just in proportion to the entireness of this submission and dependence, so will Christ reign over us, and the various dispositions and affections spring up in the soul which constitute an active dis-

play of Christian piety in the world. The soul, therefore, that is living under the influence of it, lives in the habitual exercise of faith in Christ, of supreme love to him, and in the constant enjoyment of fellowship with him. And as these exercises can never be put forth, nor kept up, nor this fellowship be maintained, but through the influence of the Holy Spirit—through whose agency alone, in the economy of Redemption, it is that we become connected with Christ, and obtain an interest in all the blessings of his salvation—true piety includes in it also the exercise of every becoming affection to the Holy Spirit. The whole soul, indeed, must be under his renewing and directing agency in order to have it manifesting and growing in the principles of piety; and as the piety of the latter days is not only to be genuine, but of an exalted character, there cannot be a doubt but that believers will then be filled with the Spirit, and, as a matter of course, also with "the peaceable fruits of righteousness to the praise of the riches of Divine grace, wherein we are made accepted in the beloved."

Having thus briefly described the nature of Christian holiness, let us now,

II. Show in what it will manifest itself. As piety is subject to no change in its principles, either as to time or place, so the only difference between the piety of the latter days and the piety of the present will consist in degree, and the exact proportion which there will be in all its parts. In endeavouring to illustrate it, we remark that we may consider it as consisting,

1. In greater purity of religious sentiment. As all our practice is regulated by the sentiments which we entertain, so the superior degree which will then exist,

will commence in the mind's forming more enlarged and correct views of Divine things, and of the whole compass of Divine truth, and of religious practice. Particularly will this be the state of the case in reference to the views which the people of God will then form of his nature, character, and government; of the plan of salvation, as constituting the most glorious display of the Divine perfections; of the person and grace of the Saviour; of the work of the Holy Spirit; of the nature of the Christian life; of the worth of the human soul; of the happiness and honour which spring from friendship with God; and of the infinite glory and blessedness of heaven. How limited and indistinct are the views which most entertain of these subjects in the present day! But such will not be the case when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; for then the Sacred Scriptures will not only be more read, but be indescribably better understood, than they are at present; and the consequence of all this will be, that the mind will form more elevated and more correct views of every thing in connexion with God and Christ, and the Spirit, and heaven and eternity. Its conceptions of these will be far more vivid and abiding; for present and perishing objects will not then, as now, occupy the chief thoughts of men. Divine things will obtain a commanding prominence in all the investigations and researches of the mind. And when we add to this the complete revolution in public sentiment concerning them, and this unwearied study of them, the superior measure of the teaching and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit which all will then possess, we can be at no loss to see that the believers of

the Millennial age will far excel us in the extent and accuracy of their knowledge of Divine things.

2. In greater spirituality of mind. Constituted as we are, we readily admit that, so long as we remain in connexion with a present world, it will be absolutely necessary for us to spend some time in thinking about, and in attending to, worldly concerns. For if man, in a state of innocence, had worldly duties to perform, as he certainly had, he cannot expect, even amid the holiness and happiness of the Millennium, to be altogether elevated above them. Besides, a becoming measure of attention to worldly concerns is no where prohibited in the word of God. All that piety seeks, in relation to it, is to regulate this attention, and to assign to it its due measure of our thoughts and time. But as it at present exists, how lamentable is the excess of thought about temporal objects when contrasted with that which is spent on those which are spiritual! How many anxious cares, too, about earthly things, which have no tendency to promote our prosperity and welfare, often harass the imagination of multitudes by night as well as by day! And by these how greatly is the exercise of holy dispositions impeded, and their vigour weakened in the soul! But in the happy state of things which will exist in the latter days, the principles of religion will take a far deeper hold of the heart; the current of the thoughts will be taken away from the world and its vanities; a constant intercourse will be kept up between the heart and God, and between earth and heaven; the Gospel will obtain a complete ascendancy over every faculty and affection of the soul. Religion, indeed, in one word, in its glories and varied

aspects, as it connects us with God and one another, and with eternity and heaven, will be the grand employment for which the mind will be ever prepared. Yes, Christians will then be spiritually-minded, and will always have a heart to rise superior to the drudgery of the world, of sin, and Satan; and this, wherever they are, and in whatever they are engaged, will appear to be their genuine character.

3. In a uniform regard to all the ordinances of religion, and in entering into them with the whole heart. The ordinances of religion have ever been the appointed mediums through which we can hold converse with God, and the gracious channels through which he communicates his love to our souls. Hence they have ever been regarded as the wells of salvation; and the soul that has tasted and known that God is gracious, when it has acted in accordance with its state and obligations, has never failed to attend to them. But owing to the present low attainments in grace, and the undue measure of attachment to the world and worldly concerns, how imperfectly has this hitherto been done? What trifling excuses often prevent us from attending to them? With what wandering thoughts do we often wait upon God? And what cold and insensible hearts do we often bring with us into his service? But, along with the complete revolution which will then take place in sentiment and disposition, there will be a grand change also respecting all the ordinances of religion. The duties of the closet, the social devotions of the family, and, above all, the public ordinances of the house of God, will be esteemed as the highest treats for the soul; and an hour spent in them will be regarded as far more pro-

fitable than ten thousand spent in the business of civil life. The wandering thought will also be gone; the cold and insensible heart will disappear from the worshipping assembly; the spiritual affections will be strong; the flame of devotion will burn bright on the altar of the heart; and the delight which the soul will enjoy in the exercise, will be a lively representation of that which the spirits of the just made perfect experience, when they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb for ever in the heavenly temple. Acts of worship, too, and probably even the public ordinances of religion, will likely be a great deal more frequent than at present; so that the piety of the Millennial Church may manifest itself very much in this way.

4. In conducting all the transactions of life with a strict regard to the principles of the Gospel. Christianity is evidently intended to be in all respects a practical system, applicable to all the concerns and transactions of life; yet it is but rare indeed that its principles are either uniformly or duly carried out. In most cases, indeed, this is regarded as impracticable; and, generally speaking, Christianity is excluded from the common affairs of life, and such rules laid down for the government of the conduct which our own sense of expediency or self-interest alone dictate. But when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, and all ranks of the community shall be brought under its influence, then every transaction will be regulated—every plan of gain will be formed and executed—and every enterprise will be prosecuted on the principles of the Gospel; and, according to its dictates, so also will the gains of successful enterprise be invariably applied. For, to use the words of the prophet

in relation to ancient Tyre, as descriptive of the views of the Millennial Church on this subject, "Her merchandize and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandize shall be for them that dwell before the Lord." In other words, wealth will then be employed not in contributing merely to external grandeur, or so as to secure our own ease or carnal enjoyment, but in plans of benevolence, and particularly for the support and spread of the Gospel. How different, however, have hitherto been the views and feelings of men! For, do we not see that the world and the things of the world are loved and pursued with the utmost eagerness for themselves, as if they possessed some intrinsic worth? But then they will be loved and pursued only as means of doing good; and, when possessed, will be supremely consecrated to the service of God. Every thing in the shape of injustice in getting, and of avarice in retaining, will be banished from the world; and every man will do unto another that which he wishes to be done unto himself. A feeling of universal confidence and open-heartedness will exist in all. Self-interest and selfish ends will never be thought of; and the whole family of man will exhibit, only on an enlarged scale, the harmony, affection, and obliging dispositions which may sometimes even now be seen in a happy and united domestic circle. Such will be another feature in the piety of the Millennial age.

5. In presiding over and adorning all the relations of life. To the various relations which exist in society, we are indebted, under God, for a great measure of our happiness. Thus, who can tell how much the

relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, of friend and neighbour, have contributed to the alleviation of the miseries of the world, and to the enhancing of our joys? Of what immense benefit, too, to a whole community has a pious and exemplary ruler been? But how much more happiness might all have experienced from these relations, if they had been uniformly formed and regulated on the principles of the Gospel? Now, as the Gospel is to mould the characters and guide the actions of all during the Millennial age, there cannot be a doubt that it will also shed its cheering influence over every relation of life; and whilst it greatly endears them to us, will put an end to every thing in them which is productive of misery. Hence conjugal unhappiness will then likely be wholly unknown—parental grief over filial rebellion and profligacy will likely never be felt—the tear of filial sorrow over parental unkindness will likely never flow—the infidelity of friendship will never need to be lamented—the want of neighbourly assistance and sympathy will never be felt—and tyranny and oppression in rulers will never make the subject to groan; for piety, in its purifying and blissful influence, will preside over and adorn all the relations of life. Yes, every one, in whatever relation he is placed, "will then adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," by carrying it out into every thing, by practising the duties which it enjoins, and by exemplifying the spirit which it produces; and then, when this is done by all, the manifestations of the malevolent dispositions, which now fill the world with so much misery, will cease, and all will dwell together in love—each contributing by his example and efforts to render another

happy; and all testifying that the true and only way to be happy is to be holy, and constantly living under the influence of the Gospel of Christ.

Having thus endeavoured to illustrate the piety which will exist during the Millennial age, let us now,

III. Point out the authority of Scripture for leading us to believe that the Millennial Church will possess it in this eminent degree. Here, were it necessary, we might again adduce the various passages which were brought forward in order to confirm the position of the previous discourse, as illustrative also of this. But it is not necessary, as we are furnished with others which are equally, if not more, explicit. Thus, the Prophet Isaiah, ch. xxxii. 15, 16, when speaking of the latter days, says, "The spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest; then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field." Every one who is acquainted with the phraseology of Scripture, knows that natural imagery is very often used in order to illustrate spiritual objects. And just so is it here. The spirit is to descend from on high, not merely as the drops of the morning dew, but as the copious shower which waters the earth, and causes it to bring forth; and the happy consequence of this is, that "the wilderness shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest." The meaning of which we apprehend to be, that the various nations that were previously ignorant of the Gospel and destitute of piety, shall become fruitful in every good

word and work; and to such an extent will piety revive and flourish, that the piety of former ages will appear but as the barrenness of the desert when contrasted with it. Still more decided is the Prophet Zechariah, ch. xii. 8, when he says, "In that day he that is feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." That is, in these times of spiritual refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the weakest Christian will be equal to the strongest now, and in his exercises even rival the man after God's own heart. And as it regards the distinguished and most eminent members of the household of faith, here denominated "the house of David," in their dispositions and exercises they will be liker the angels of heaven than men on the earth. Yea, the prophet even goes farther than this, and says, "they shall be as God." That is, in their purity, benevolence, and conduct, the resemblance between him and them shall be complete; and the injunction of the Saviour shall be fully realized, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." And when the piety of the Church shall have equalled this beautiful and sublime description, it will more than realize the highest conceptions which we can now form of it. For, think of the various nations which are now sunk in brutal ignorance and idolatry, equaling the most favoured spots of the Church in the present age, and the weakest believers becoming as the strongest now, and the strongest then becoming as the angels, yea, resembling God himself, and we have presented before us a representation of excellence and happiness which must be seen and experienced before we can fully comprehend it. In such

a state of things moral evil must in a great measure have fled away from the world, and the earth have become a no mean representation of heaven. Rejoicing, then, in the certainty of these holy and happy days, let us all endeavour to hasten them on,

1. By seeking a greater measure of holiness in ourselves. By the Millennium, we have already told you we mean merely the universal and triumphant influence of the Gospel over the whole world. Hence, the more extensive that we see it spreading, and the more eminent that we see its holy and happy influence manifesting itself, we see the unquestionable evidence of its approach. And who is there that does not long for its commencement? But whilst we long and pray for it, never let us forget that, commence when it will, it will do so in a revival of personal religion. Should not all then who are praying, and longing for it, begin now to seek after a higher measure of Christian excellence, of Christian usefulness, and of Christian happiness? Rest not satisfied, therefore, my beloved brethren, with low attainments. Forget the things that are behind—reach forth to those that are before you, and endeavour now to reach some measure of the piety, and to enjoy some portion of the happiness, of the Millennial age. And, in place of falling behind, endeavour to be in advance of the general spirit and attainments of the day in which you live—that thus you may reach the exalted dignity and honour, the highest which a creature on earth can reach, namely, the being eminently instrumental in extending the Redeemer's glory in the world, and promoting the present and everlasting happiness of man, and securing the universal triumph of the Gospel over all lands.

2. By discountenancing in every practicable way, and as far as we can, every species of wickedness. In looking around on the world, even in the present day, what, may we not ask, is there which hinders the rapid spread of the Gospel, and the speedy introduction of the Millennium, but wickedness? Yes; it is wickedness in the various forms in which it exists in Christian countries that enfeebles the efforts of the Church, and that prevents so many of her members from reaching that eminence in piety which they might otherwise attain. Do we therefore expect, and long for a period when iniquity, as ashamed, shall hide her face in the dust, we must begin now to frown upon it wherever we see it; and by the diffusion of correct principles among all around us, and especially by the exemplification in our own conduct of every thing that is pure, lovely, and of good report, endeavour to induce "the wicked to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and lead him to return to the Lord that he may have mercy upon him, and to our God that he may abundantly pardon." And if every disciple of Christ were to act in this manner, how soon might every wicked person be brought to feel the influence of the Gospel, and perceive that when we oppose and decry his wickedness, we have no other end in view but to do him good in a present world, and to make him a fellow-heir with ourselves of the grace of everlasting life. Would you therefore be instrumental in introducing the happy days to which we have been directing your attention? Here is a way in which all may do something, and many much, that may hasten them on. And for your encouragement let it be remembered, "that he who converteth a sinner from the

error of his ways, will not only save a soul from death, but will hide a multitude of sins," which might otherwise have contributed to the ruin of many souls.

3. By endeavouring to train up all who are under our care in the love and practice of an eminent degree of piety. If the habits of thinking and acting of those who are advanced in life, are too strong, and too long formed, for us to expect any very great change in them, this remark cannot apply to the rising generation; for their views of things are not yet established, and their habits of action are not yet acquired. How important, therefore, must it be to secure them to the love and practice of a more eminent degree of piety than at present prevails? Parents, therefore, and all who are intrusted with the training of the youthful mind, should use every effort to protect it against the many errors and the grovelling spirit of the present age, and to fill it with the most exalted views of the necessity of piety to the well being of man, and of the happiness which springs from it. Children, indeed, should be taught from their earliest days to regard it as the very first thing to which they should attend; to form also a high standard of moral and benevolent action; and should be encouraged constantly to endeavour to excel in it; so that, in place of sinking lower and lower in the scale of Christian attainment, each successive generation, as it fills up the place of the past, might reach higher and higher, till the love, and purity, and happiness of the Millennial age be universally introduced. And what an honour will it be to any to be thus instrumental in training up those whose exertions are to introduce, and whose eyes are to be blessed with seeing, this happy reign of righte-

ousness and truth in the earth. Come, then, my Brethren, let us all thus engage in this noble enterprise; and let us endeavour to leave the rising generation more intelligent, more holy, and more happy than ourselves; that those who are to come, as they rise up and look back on our humble efforts, may call us blessed. And should God crown your efforts with his blessing, and enable you to leave behind you a race distinguished for more eminent piety than yourselves, it will be the richest legacy which you can leave to the Church, your country, and the world.

DISCOURSE IV.

UNION OF THE CHURCH DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

JER. xxxii. 39. And I will give them one heart, and one way.

To the mind that has paid any thing like a becoming measure of attention to the difficulties in the way of any great and arduous undertaking, nothing can appear of greater importance in order to insure success than union amongst its friends; for it is a true saying, that union is strength. But not only is it strength; in every thing involving co-operation, it is essentially necessary to comfort and happiness; for, just as it or its opposite prevails, so do these or misery prevail amongst all who are professedly engaged in a common enterprise. The beauty and utility of any system depend also very much on its unity of design, and the adaptation of all its parts harmoniously to co-operate so as to effect it. Now, no one who is acquainted with the Gospel can need to be informed that its object is *one;* and that this object is to bring glory to God in the highest, and to proclaim peace on earth, and good will towards men; so that, wherever we find it professed in its genuine spirit, we may naturally expect to find it also productive of these happy effects. But, owing to a variety of causes, these effects have been exhibited only in a very imperfect manner and in a very limited degree. For as Satan knew full

well that union was strength, so his efforts seem to have been principally directed in order to prevent it, by sowing discord and contradictory sentiments and errors among the Disciples of Christ. Hence the extraordinary number of opposing sects and parties into which the Church is so unhappily divided; and hence, too, the rancour with which their discussions and controversies have been so frequently carried on. Now, to a mind which takes a comprehensive view of all the evils which have flowed from this, no subject can appear more delightful than that which is the subject of the promise of the text; namely, the arrival of a time, and of a state of things in the Church, when all this discord and contrariety of views shall cease, and when the various tribes of the Israel of God shall have one heart, and shall walk in one way; when the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; and when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim; but all shall dwell together in love, in the unity of the faith and in the bonds of a holy and lasting peace. This constitutes, as you may recollect, the next topic of discussion in the series of our Millennial discourses; namely, The union of the Church during the Millennium.

In directing your attention to this subject, let us consider: I. In what the Union of the Millennial Church will consist. II. The grounds for believing that it will ever be brought about. III. The happy consequences which will follow from it.

I. In what the union of the Millennial Church will consist. From the nature of the long-boasted and dreary union of the Catholic Church, it is obvious

that a union in name and appearance may exist even amongst the most heterogeneous and conflicting materials; but such is not the union which will exist in the happy days of the world to which we are looking forward; for it will consist, we remark,

1. In the belief of the same doctrinal truths. The doctrines of the Gospel are to be regarded as occupying the same place in Theology as first or elementary principles do in any science; without a knowledge of which it is impossible to make any progress in it. We are well aware, indeed, that many profess to pay little regard to doctrinal sentiments, under the mistaken idea that it is a matter of little or no consequence what a man's opinions be providing his conduct be right. But this view of the case is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural; for it either overlooks or sets aside the unquestionable principle that, as a man *thinketh* in his heart, so will he be in his outward conduct. Indeed, in place of regarding a man's thoughts or opinions as of little or no moment, true philosophy will ever teach us to regard them as of the first or utmost importance to the formation of character. For unless the mind do constant and universal violence to itself, it will naturally act out its principles, whatever they may be. If our doctrinal sentiments, therefore, be wrong, it is morally impossible that our conduct can be right; and if we are not agreed in them, there can be no real union either in principle, in feeling, or in operation. Besides, whatever doctrine God has revealed, he has revealed it that it should be believed, and be carried out in all its practical bearings on the heart and conduct. And such will be the reverence for the Divine authority, and

the confidence in the Divine wisdom, and the zeal for the Divine glory in all the followers of Christ during the latter days, that they will vie with each other in their attachment to Divine truth. Their union, therefore, will not be formed on any compromising principle, or at the expense of sacrificing truth for the sake of peace. No; valuable though peace be, yet it is bought at too dear a price when it is procured at the sacrifice of truth. Peace will follow as a natural consequence from union, and their union will be formed because "they are all of the same mind—all speak the same thing—and are all perfectly joined in the faith of the Gospel." But though there will be a perfect harmony in doctrinal sentiments, without any of those conflicting views which at present divide and agitate the Church, yet it does not follow that there will be no difference either in the clearness or extent of their knowledge of these. For as the mind of no two individuals is exactly alike, either as to vigour, capacity, or the proportionate bearing of one faculty on another; and as diversity in circumstances is likely to exist, more or less, even to the end of the world; so we may naturally expect that there will also be a diversity as to the clearness and extent of knowledge. But it will be a diversity without contrariety; and, like that which exists among the created beings in heaven, will only communicate beauty, delight, and improvement to the whole. And, as in heaven the superiority of angels to redeemed spirits does not interrupt the harmony of their delightful exercises, so will it then be upon the earth; for no degree of superiority will be permitted to fill with pride on the one hand, or with envy and discontent on the other; for all will have one heart, and all will walk in one way.

2. In adhering to the same principles of government, discipline, and worship. Our preceding remark referred more particularly to the internal state of the Church; this refers to its outward form, and the management of its affairs. And here, as in the former instance, we are well aware that there is a diversity of opinion as to how far the principle of union will extend; that is, whether there will be a complete uniformity of plan, as well as an avowed adherence to the same great principles of government, in the various sections of the Church. Of the necessity of good government and discipline, in order to preserve the purity and secure the prosperity of the Church, all the genuine disciples of Christ are agreed. But, it is added, that as one and the same object may be gained by a variety of ways, so it is supposed that these also may be reached by a variety of means, or plans, or modes of action; so that the various systems of government and discipline which are at present in use, may, according to this scheme, be perpetuated to the end of the world. As we are, however, of a different opinion from this, we shall briefly state the reasons which lead us to be so. In the first place, we cannot believe that God has left his Church without any prescribed form of government and discipline, to be moulded according to the imperfect and frequently erroneous views of men. In opposition to this view of the case, we firmly believe that he has so revealed his mind and will on these, as well as on all other subjects connected with the interests of his Church, that it requires us only faithfully to follow it in order to arrive at the same conclusions. Secondly, we firmly believe that a period will arrive when all the disciples

of Christ will thus act; and whenever they do so, we have no doubt that they will be found abandoning every thing that is merely of human origin, and strictly adhering to the law and the testimony of the Lord our God. A blind attachment to that which is ancient—but not primitive—merely because it is so, which has ever been the fruitful source of by far the greatest part of the errors that prevail on this subject, will give place to an enlightened and supreme regard to the word of Jesus. And as the law of the Lord is said to be perfect and exceeding broad, extending in fact to every thing—that is, laying down the principles which are to guide us in all our actions and relations with one another—whenever this happy state of things shall have arrived that all will strictly adhere to it, there cannot be a doubt this there will be a beautiful harmony even as to their form of government, discipline, and worship, as well as it regards their doctrinal sentiments.

3. In co-operating towards the attainment of the same objects. The great objects which do, and which always will lie near the hearts of the children of God in a present world, may be said to be the glory of God, the edification of one another, the peace and prosperity of Zion, and the universal happiness of man. Interesting and important, however, though these objects be, yet it is too obvious to be denied that they have hitherto been but little regarded by the Church in her collective capacity. The spirit of division and of party, which has hitherto so extensively prevailed in the Church, has sadly prevented the co-operative principle from being duly carried out, except in plans of proselytism to our own peculiar views and inte-

rests. So that if the glory of God was pursued as an object, it was done so only as connected with ourselves. If the edification of the saints was regarded, it was only as they stood connected with our own body. If the peace and prosperity of Zion were sought, it has generally been only the peace and prosperity of our own party, to the confusion and detriment of all others. And if the universal happiness of the family of man has been sought, it has generally been done only in so far as they would acquiesce in and forward our sectarian views. But far different will be the state of things during the Millennial age. For as all the disciples of Christ will then be perfectly joined in the faith of the Gospel, and will all mind the same things, party spirit will then have expired, and the mighty intellectual and spiritual energies of the Church, in place of being frittered down into so many insignificant combinations that they almost cease to produce any effect on the great mass of the community, or of being employed, as they now often are, in counteracting the plans of one another, will all be united in contributing to the support and attainment of the same great objects. And what a vast change will this produce in the Church herself, as well as in the world? Sectarianism will no longer raise her partition walls between any of the sections of the Church; and the glory of God, the edification of one another, the peace and prosperity of Zion, and the happiness of man, will be pursued on the most extensive scale, and on principles which will approve themselves to the judgment and heart of all. Yea, so universal and influential will this co-operation be, we feel persuaded, that even national interests will be pur-

sued no farther than as they are compatible with the happiness, and contribute to the improvement, of the whole world.

4. In the manifestation of mutual and ardent attachment to one another. To the honour of the primitive believers it is mentioned, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." The command of their Lord and Master was still fresh in their recollection, to "love one another, even as he had loved them." Hence they loved as brethren, and lived as such. They were united to one another in the truth, and for the sake of the truth; and they studied to owe no man any thing but love. It is long since, however, that golden age of the Church has passed away; and since then, no one of the social affections has suffered more severely than love to the Brethren. Nor is it difficult to account for this. The existence of division and of party spirit, to which we have already alluded, completely explains it. For wherever these exist, they will certainly prevent, or cramp, or fetter it in its operations. But, as the cause or source of all these will be removed, in all being united in their views, plans, and objects, so every thing in the shape of distance in manner and disaffection in spirit will also be done away, and all will love one another out of a pure heart fervently. The envy of Ephraim to Judah, as the prophet expresses it, will no longer exist; neither will Judah any more vex Ephraim. Brotherly love, as it existed in primitive times, with all its kindred feelings and delightful associations, will again revive in every heart. The interest which all will take in one another's concerns, will be sincere and deep, and

such as will fully realize the beautiful representation of the Apostle, "that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members should suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it." The selfish principle which, in the present day, leads many to seek their own aggrandizement and honour to the injury if not ruin of others, will never be permitted to appear in the transactions and intercourse of life. So that, though all will be diligent in their respective callings and spheres, no man will think on, or pursue his own affairs, without having a friendly eye to those of others; but all will feel as the members of the same family usually do to each other, considering that what is for the welfare and honour of one, is also for the welfare and honour of the whole. In one word, the attachment which all will have to one another, will be in all respects such as becometh those who are engaged in a common pilgrimage, and as are looking forward with delight to an eternal dwelling together in the glory and happiness of heaven. Having thus considered in what the unity of the Millennial Church will consist, let us consider,

II. The grounds we have for believing that it will ever be brought about. So different is the state of things which we have now represented from what exists in the present day, that some may possibly suppose it to be quite incompatible with the sinful imperfection which will no doubt more or less remain in connexion with our nature so long as we are in a present world. Let us therefore examine this part of the subject with all due care. As an evidence that this state of union will exist, we remark,

1. It is the subject of Divine promise. Of this nature is the language of the text. And though the whole passage, doubtless, has a special reference to the in-gathering of the Jews, yet it is to them only as constituting part of the Christian Church; so that, if such a happy state of union will exist among them, it will no doubt also exist among all. The same event is also foretold by the Prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxxvii. 16, 17, under the emblem of two sticks, which represent Judah and Ephraim, becoming one in the hand of the Lord; a union, too, which is represented as lasting for ever. Now, in reference to these, as well as all the other promises of God, we must ever remember that he "is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken it, and shall he not make it good?" In the ten thousands of instances in which his promises have been already fulfilled, we have the clearest evidence that the Lord our God "is the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." Yes; in Divine faithfulness and unchanging veracity he says, "my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Now, as it is his purpose that such a state of union should exist even on earth, as the Sacred Scriptures evidently lead us to believe that it is, as He cannot and will not change, and as treasures of omnipotent and everlasting might are with him, we may rest assured that he can, and in due season that he will, bring it to pass. For whatever difficulties there may be in the way of it, none of them can be insuperable to him who has the hearts of all men in his hands,

and can turn them whithersoever he will. Though we, therefore, had not another ground on which we could rest our faith and hope of it than this, yet it would be all-sufficient of itself to lead us to look forward to it with the greatest confidence and delight. But we remark,

2. It is enjoined as a duty. "Now I beseech you, brethren," says the great Apostle of the Gentiles, "by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." The same duty is also no less authoritatively enjoined when he says, "Fulfil ye my joy that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Now, in reference to all duties, it may be remarked that the very commanding of them implies the practicability of performing them, in the use of the means which God is willing and ready to bestow on us in order to enable us to do so. But here, we are well aware, it may be remarked that it is as much a duty now as it ever can or ever will be; hence, if we see, the objector adds, that notwithstanding this, the Church has been, and still continues to be, torn by divisions and the angry passions of men, we have no reason to believe that it ever will be otherwise in time to come. But in reference to this mode of inferential reasoning from the past to the future, we beg leave to say that, however plausible it may be, yet it is wholly inadmissible in determining the point at issue. For the question here is not what has been, but what does the word of the Lord tell us will be in time to come. And whenever we have settled this point, all that remains

for us to do is, to attend to the means which God has enjoined in order to bring it about. Now, in the happy days that are before us, we have already ascertained that the knowledge of Divine things will be vastly greater than it is at present; a circumstance alone which will remove many of the causes which have been productive of, and which still perpetuate disunion. A reverence, too, for the Divine authority will be greatly higher than it is at present; so that every commanded duty will obtain a much greater measure of attention than it now does. And as religion will then be the great business of all, it will of course exercise a controling influence over all the evil passions and desires of the human heart; and whenever it does this, the fruitful source of disunion will be removed; whilst the understanding, raised above this corrupting bias, will be left to feel the force of every Divine command; and whenever this shall have become general, we shall find that all discrepancies will cease, and that the whole household of faith, like the primitive believers, will be of one heart and one soul. For as disunion, and all the evil works which have proceeded from it, spring not from the Gospel itself, but from the human heart, the very moment that all are brought to attend to it, and it alone, as the rule of faith and practice, as it speaks the same language to all, so the views and affections of all will naturally harmonize; they will see eye to eye, and will all co-operate to the attainment and preservation of a state of perfect harmony and love.

We remark still farther,

3. It is the prayer of Christ. In that sublime and wonderful prayer of our Lord, which he presented to

his Father only a short time before his last sufferings, as he looked forward to the various generations of men who should believe on him, we find that he thus prayed for them—"that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe thou hast sent me." The union, you perceive, which Christ here prays for amongst his disciples, is the most complete, in all respects, which can possibly be conceived. Indeed, the union which exists between the Father and the Son, which he here constitutes the pattern of that which is to exist among his people, is the most perfect of which the human mind can form any idea. For it is a union which extends to every thing—to nature, to counsel, to operation, and to enjoyment. And, to prevent us from supposing that this union can exist only in heaven, he adds as the object of this prayer for them—"that the world may believe thou hast sent me." In other words, the great object of this union, apart from the happiness which will proceed from it to his people, is, that the ungodly may thereby be led to regard the Gospel as of Divine authority—to lay aside their contempt of it and hostility against it—and come and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Now, is it reasonable, think you, to believe that He, who "never said to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain," will be inattentive to this request of his own Son—a request, too, that is so intimately connected with his own glory, as well as with the happiness of his people, and the universal triumph of his kingdom over the empire of Satan? Far be such thoughts from our mind concerning Him, who is the Father of mercies, and hath blessed us with all spiritual

blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. But, in order to prevent the possibility of this conclusion, we are expressly told that "Him the Father heareth always." And for this very obvious reason; he is perfectly acquainted with all his designs and purposes concerning us; so that this knowledge, combined with the perfection of his nature, renders it impossible for him to ask any thing of the Father which he is not of his own accord willing to bestow. Now, since Christ, with this knowledge, and with this unchangeable perfection of nature, has thus interceded and may still be interceding for us, there cannot be a doubt, in my humble opinion, that the time will assuredly come when all his people shall have but one Lord, one faith, one Baptism; and when they shall all dwell together in love. Thus, whether we consider this union as a matter of Divine promise, or as a commanded duty, or as the subject of the prayer of Christ, we are led to the delightful conclusion that it will assuredly come to pass.

Let us now direct your attention,

III. To the happy consequences which will flow from it.

1. It will be greatly honouring to Divine truth. Nothing can be more evident than that, as the source of Revelation is one, and as all the holy men who were the instruments of revealing it, spake as they were moved by the one Holy Spirit of Inspiration, so there can be no contradictory truths or conflicting sentiments contained in it. Yet, though this is beyond all disputation the case, what a multitude of conflicting views, either through the ignorance or wickedness of men, have been professedly deduced from it! And how

often have the enemies of our God and of his Christ raised the shout of triumph over us on account of what they term the superior clearness and certainty of the voice of Nature above that of Revelation? Now, though we do not for one moment admit the truth of this assertion, yet who does not see that the divisions in Zion, whilst they bring a great and lasting reproach on her members, have also greatly strengthened the hands of her enemies—as they have furnished them with weapons, which in many instances they have successfully wielded against her best interests. Thus, how often has the Infidel replied to all the attempts of believers to convince and save him—"Go your ways, and when you are agreed among yourselves, then come, and we will talk over the matter." Now this period, and this state of things to which he so tauntingly refers, the text leads us to anticipate with the greatest certainty; and when it shall have arrived, how will the boastings of the enemy be turned into silence, and what a triumph will be gained by Divine truth when there shall not be a jarring sentiment or conflicting passion throughout all the kindreds and generations of men during the Millennial age! For, never let it be forgotten, that the great instrument by which this spiritual renovation of the human family is to be produced, is the word of God; and when it is produced, how clearly will it prove that the Scriptures are not the word of man, but the word of Him who is perfectly acquainted with the human heart, and has adapted them as the means for "casting down its imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Yes;

when the various systems of Infidel philosophy and heathenism shall have perished from under these heavens, and the whole family of man shall be united in one faith, and the war of words, and the still worse war of passion in the human bosom shall cease, then shall be seen, in its due extent, the value of the Gospel as the instrument for enlightening and saving the world.

2. It will greatly increase the efficiency of the Church. If the Gospel is the instrument in the hands of men for enlightening and saving the world, the Church is the instrument in the hands of God for giving it free course among the nations, and for bringing the tribute of glory to him from it which is his due. Now, as this is the case, every thing, of course, which has a tendency to call off the attention of the Church from this great object, must be regarded as a diminishing of her efficiency. And what has tended so much to do this, as the many divisions which have unhappily so long existed within her? But when all these divisions shall have ceased, and when the life-giving Spirit shall pervade all hearts, what will it be but as life from the dead? What an incalculable amount of intelligence and purity will she then possess? And when her wealth is consecrated to God, and her energies are all put forth in his service without any object within herself to attract her attention or enfeeble her efforts, what a mighty energy will she display, and what honour will she bring to her glorious and exalted head! What energy and power, e. g. have sometimes been put forth in the contendings of nation with nation? Yet nothing like what will be manifested by the Church during the Millennium has ever been seen on the face

of the earth. For it will be the physical and intellectual power of the whole world, under the direction of Divine knowledge and Divine grace, concentrated on one object, the glory of God and the happiness of man. And when this shall be the case, what may not the Church accomplish in the way of bringing glory to Christ, even on earth! How vain will it then be for his enemies—if enemies he should then have amongst men—to strive against him? The perpetrators and abettors of crime—if any there should then be—will be entirely borne down by the overwhelming influence of intelligence and holiness which will every where exist, and all ranks and conditions of men, and all things, be made subservient to one grand object—the glory of God and the happiness of all. For as the Church will be co-extensive with the world, so the world's resources will be entirely at her command, and will all be employed in his service and for his glory. What a different thing then, in point of efficiency, will she be from what she either is, or has been!

3. It will greatly increase the happiness of the people of God. Every thing in the shape of discord has a direct tendency to diminish the happiness of all who may come within its influence. And how much has the happiness of a family, of a town, and of a whole neighbourhood, been sometimes disturbed and diminished by the various religious contentions which have more or less universally prevailed? Hence the social happiness of the people of God has hitherto been exceedingly limited, and even that, liable to frequent and very painful interruptions. For error has often separated the best friends; whilst persecution, through mistaken zeal or a bigotted attachment to some fa-

vourite party, has also not unfrequently made the ways of Zion to mourn. And it cannot be questioned, that it is the natural tendency of all rival associations to prevent the due exercise of the social affections, and those numberless acts of kindness and sympathy which flow from them. But as all such associations are to cease, and as persecution, with its fines and penalties, its tortures and racks, shall no more be permitted to hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; and as error, with its many windings and false glosses, shall no more deceive the nations, but all shall know the truth, and live up to it; then every thing which has obstructed the happiness of man with man shall have come to an end, and the fullest and freest exercise of all the Christian graces and affections will take place in all. And when this is the condition of our world, how happy must it be. How enviable the lot of all who will enjoy it? For to live in the exercise and enjoyment of these, is but to live in the exercise and enjoyment of all the happiness of which our natures in a present state are susceptible. Thus the honour which this state of things will bring to Divine truth, and the greater measure of efficiency which it will impart to the Church, and the great increase in happiness which it will secure to all, must render it devoutly to be wished by every benevolent and sanctified mind. By way of improvement, therefore, of this subject, let us endeavour to hasten on this part of the Millennial glory of the Church,

1. By carefully excluding from our system of truth every thing that has not the authority of God for it. Though the various denominations in the Church profess a supreme reverence for the word of God, and to

be guided by it, yet it is probably not going too far to say, that in all of them many things may be found which are not according "to the law and the testimony." Hence arises the absolute necessity of a frequent and thorough revision of all our views, and the abandonment of every thing in doctrine and practice which is not in strict accordance with the faith that is in Christ. And, were all to adopt this principle, and carefully to exclude from their views all that are of no higher an origin than mere human authority, in place of contending—as they often do—for the minutiæ of their distinguishing peculiarities, we have no doubt that all the lovers of the truth, and the genuine possessors of the grace of God, would find themselves even now much more agreed than they are aware of. And among the many encouraging signs of the times in which we live, it is by no means the least that mere human authority is rapidly losing its influence in the Church, and all seem disposed and determined to have every opinion tried by the only unerring standard of faith and practice—the Word of God. Now, just in proportion as this disposition prevails, and is faithfully carried out, just so may we expect to approach each other in the knowledge and faith of the Gospel. And the more that any one denomination displays of this happy spirit, the more will be its influence in contributing to the introduction of universal harmony and love, and the higher its standing in the Millennial Church. Here, then, is a subject that is well worthy of our highest ambition; namely, which of us will come nearer, in our views of the Gospel, the truth as it will universally prevail during the Millennium. And here let me remark, that this eminence

is to be gained not by sacrificing even a single particle of Divine truth, but by the leaving out of our system all that is human, and coming to a thorough knowledge, and a uniform practice of all that the Lord our God has spoken to us.

2. By cultivating a kind and forbearing disposition towards all who conscientiously differ from us. In the present divided state of the Church it cannot be doubted that there are many who conscientiously differ from one another, and whose differences are founded entirely on a sense of duty. And to all such differences a becoming measure of respect is due from every one; for, if they are ever to be removed, it is not by the assumption of arrogance on the one hand—as if "we were the men, and wisdom should die with us"—nor, on the other, by the use of opprobrious epithets impeaching their sincerity. The union of the Church never has been, and never will be, promoted by such measures as these. In the manifestations of the Spirit, which have often been given in various branches of the nominal or visible Church of Christ, God has taught us a lesson on this subject, which we should endeavour to follow; and wherever we perceive the evidences of his saving power, we should respect and love one another for what he has made us. Such, too, is the importance of this spirit, that it is only just in so far as it prevails that we are in a fit state of mind for calmly considering our mutual differences, and that we are likely to discover the undue measure of importance that we may have attached to some things, as well as the mistakes which we may have made in reference to others. And whenever these are discovered, and this disposition is allowed its

free exercise, the greater part of the difficulty in the way of union will be found to have been surmounted. Let all, therefore, cultivate a charitable disposition, and be kindly affectioned, forbearing one another in love. Let me not, however, be misunderstood; as if I were recommending a union at the expense of a due regard to truth. No; truth, and even the truth as it is in Jesus, must lie at the foundation of the whole, and must, and ever will be the grand connecting link between all who love him in sincerity; and any union that is not formed on this principle, can never obtain his blessing, nor be permanent. But that which seems to be so much needed among all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, is the laying aside of all asperity in religious discussion, and manifesting, on all occasions, that if we do, and must still differ, it is not a bigotted attachment to early prejudices, nor a blind zeal for things or views of little or no importance, but a conscientious regard for that which appears to us to be the truth as it is in Christ that leads us to do so.

3. By using every practicable effort fully to understand the revealed will of God, and to diffuse correct views of it as wide as possible. When we consider who the Author of Revelation is, and the awfully important and infinitely glorious things about which it treats, we cannot be surprised, especially when we take into account in connexion with these our intellectual imbecility and moral depravity, that there are many "things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction." The fact is, to become thoroughly acquainted with any science, requires great patience and perseve-

rance in the study of it. And just so it is, in an eminent degree, with regard to the Scriptures. For, though the great fundamental doctrines and facts of the Gospel are so plainly revealed that even a child may savingly understand them, yet it must not be forgotten that it contains a revelation of many things, into which even the angels, with all the superior faculties with which they are endowed, desire to look, and into which they have looked with ever-increasing knowledge and delight since they were revealed to man. How vain is it, therefore, for us to expect, during the short day of life, fully to comprehend all the deep things of God. The fact is, if we would understand these things, we must be ever learning—making the study, and not merely the reading of the word of God, our daily employment. And to all we must add, frequent and fervent supplication to the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; that he would lead us into the truth, and teach us that which we know not. And just in proportion as *he* thus enlightens us, so let us study to diffuse this light, till all around us shall come to see light in His light clearly.

DISCOURSE V.

UNIVERSAL PEACE DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

Is. ii. 4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Ever since Chedarlaomer, and his three confederate kings, came from a great distance that they might make war with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their three friends, the kings and rulers of this world seem to have considered it their peculiar privilege, and their principal employment, to make war with one another. And had it been merely a war of individuals, in place of nations, I know not that the world would have had much reason to lament it; as it would thereby have been the sooner freed from the oppressive influence of many who have proved the worst enemies to its peace and prosperity. But, unhappily, the same spirit of aggression and plunder, and a thirst for power, by which they have been so frequently actuated, have in innumerable instances been communicated to the people over whom they reigned; so that, in reading over the history of nations, we find that the greater portion of it consists of little else than a history of their wars, and an account of their heroes, and the number of men whom they slew, and the

towns and cities which they pillaged and destroyed, and the wide-spreading misery which, as instruments, they had the *honour* to occasion. And notwithstanding all the heart-rending lessons which war has taught us—during the thousands of years that are past since man first lifted up his hand against his brother—the spirit of war still seems so deeply seated in the human heart, and so easily called forth into exercise, that to many it may possibly seem perfectly chimerical to talk of its ever coming to an end. For wars, say some, are commanded in the word of God; as in the case of the Jews and the nations of Canaan. They are necessary, say others, in order to prevent the population of the world from increasing too much. And they are no less necessary, say others, in order to give life and prosperity to trade and commerce. But to all this sophistry it may be replied, that the iniquity of the nations of Canaan was so great that Divine patience and justice could bear with it no longer; so that the war of extermination in reference to them, which the Jews were commanded to carry on, was a Divine judgment, of which they were only the executioners; and till a nation can produce a Divine command for going to war with another, it is altogether irrelevant to appeal to this case for authority. As to the other two circumstances, which are sometimes pled as excuses for war, they manifest so much impiety on the one hand, and such a trifling with the requirements of the Divine law on the other, that it is surprising they should ever have been heard of in a Christian land. For, can it be, think you, that God gives existence to human beings merely that the demon of war may be supplied with victims, or that carnage may be provided for the battle-field, or that

the prosperity and happiness of man should depend on the murder of his fellows, or the pillage and destruction of their homes? Far be such thoughts from the bosom of him who has been taught that "God is love," and that goodness and mercy are over all his works, and that all things shall praise him, and that it is the glory and happiness of man to be like him. In looking forward, therefore, to the glory and happiness of the Millennial age, let us contemplate that part of it which will consist in the enjoyment of universal peace.

In considering this subject, let us, 1st, Establish the certainty of the declaration that there shall be universal peace during the Millennium. 2d, Point out the means by which it will be brought about. 3d, The happiness which will proceed from it.

Let us then, I. Endeavour to establish the certainty of the declaration that there will be universal peace during the Millennium. For all the information which we can possibly possess on this subject, we must be indebted to the Sacred Scriptures; for human sagacity, or foresight, when it attempts to reason or prognosticate about the future, unless it has some solid foundation on which it rests, can rank no higher in the scale of argument than mere conjecture. But whenever, and for whatever, we have a "Thus saith the Lord God," we have all that is necessary to certify us of its truth; and if it should be an event, or a state of things still future, to lead us also to look forward to it with as much confidence as we do to the rising of the sun on the coming day. For, in reference to every prediction of Revelation, it must be borne in mind that it is the word of Him who knows the end from the be-

ginning, and whose perfections place him beyond the possibility of either being deceived himself or of deceiving any one, and who can, and who will exert omnipotence in order to bring it to pass. When the mind, therefore, turns to this sacred volume, tired, it may be, of the clashing of arms and the din and devastations of war, anxious, too, to find something on which it can rest its hopes of brighter and better days for our world, it is met by the anthem of the multitude of the heavenly host who descended to grace the advent of their incarnate Lord—the second part of whose joyful and exalted song was, "Peace on earth." Not that universal peace was then to be granted, or then to prevail; but that the system was then commenced which was designed and calculated to produce it. And though Christian nations, as they are called, have hitherto given no evidence of any thing like a becoming regard to this feature of the religion which they profess, yet it by no means follows that they never will. Nay, farther we remark, that this part of the Angelic song, as it is to be regarded as part of the Revelation of God to man, and in the light of a prophecy, lays an immoveable foundation for believing that the time will assuredly come when they will. In the 72d Psl. also, which is universally admitted to have a special reference to the state of things when Christ shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, we have the fullest and most satisfactory evidence that this will be the happy condition of the whole world. Thus, the delighted Psalmist, when looking to this period, exclaims—"The mountains,"—which around Jerusalem were generally the haunts of banditti, and therefore fruitful with danger,—

"shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and *abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.*" That is, we apprehend—In those days when all kings shall fall down before Christ, and all nations shall serve him, peace shall be the happy lot of the whole world, till the moon and stars, and even the sun itself, shall set in everlasting darkness. The same state of things is beautifully described in the glowing and figurative language of the Prophet Isaiah, when he says, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den." The whole of this passage is nothing else than a personification of the evil and benevolent dispositions of the human heart; the beasts of prey serving to illustrate the one, and the domestic animals the other. And what can the representation of their associating together, and the safety of the sucking child among them mean, but the destruction of the evil and the prevalence of the benevolent dispositions? Yea, to such an extent is this represented as taking place, that it is added, "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." And to show that all this is to take place under the Christian dispensation, it is stated, as the cause from which it springs—"for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." But we need go no farther than the language of the text for evidence

enough of this point. For who is it that is represented as "judging among the nations, and as rebuking many people?" Does not the whole passage lead us to see that it is none other than *he*, who is "Prince of the kings of the earth, and Governor among the nations?" And when is it that mankind are represented as beating their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and nation not lifting up sword against nation, and as learning war no more? Yes; when is it that all this shall take place; but when the Church of Christ shall be extended over the whole world; or, as the prophet expresses it, "In the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it." The same event, and generally in the same language, is also referred to by the Prophet Micah, who adds, in order to remove all incredulity respecting it, that "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And what is it that he has spoken? Why, that during the happy state of things which shall exist when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, mankind shall not hurt, nor destroy in all his holy mountain; that the slaying of men shall no longer be learned as an art or practised as a science; and that, tired of seeing the implements of war, and probably ashamed of having them about their houses, they will send them to the anvil or the forge to be made into the peaceful and useful instruments of husbandry! O happy state of things, when the fields of this beautiful world shall no longer be saturated with human blood—nor the demon of war riot amid the groans of the dying, nor smile at the tears of the widowed and

the orphaned, nor a single human being shall be found monster enough to teach his brother man how that he may become the most skilful and successful in hurrying his fellow-creatures to the bar of God. No such arts will then be needed or taught; for mankind will have become too wise to think of redressing their wrongs in this manner, and too good ever to attempt it; so that every man shall sit under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid. Let us now point out,

II. The means by which it will be brought about. It will be effected, we apprehend,

1. By a due regard being paid to the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel. That all war, at least on the part of the aggressors, is founded in injustice, and is only a manifestation of the malevolent dispositions of the human heart, cannot be questioned; and that the Gospel, both in its doctrines and precepts, is the enemy of all injustice and malevolence is no less certain. And, as an illustration of its genuine spirit and tendency, we have only to view it as it is expounded by the Saviour himself. Thus, as an epitome of all its requirements, he says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Or, as he elsewhere illustrates it—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Or, as he has farther stated the

same principle by the pen of the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, ch. xii. 19, 21, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Now, we appeal to every man who understands the meaning of language, whether, if these principles had been allowed to form the characters and to guide the actions of the followers of Jesus, there could ever have been such a thing as a war between Christian nations? For would not the principle of love to each other as we love ourselves, have effectually prevented all injustice and unkindness, and given the freest and fullest scope to all the benevolent feelings which the grace and the spirit of God can implant in the heart? And if, in place of acting on the principle of retaliation and revenge, the aggrieved had resolved not to be overcome of evil, but to *overcome evil with good*, or to be strong, only to repel injury without seeking after the life of those who may have done it, and thus *rendering evil for evil*, wars—if any there had been—could only have been but of short duration and of limited extent. And if ever a time will arrive when mankind shall be guided by these principles, will not the spirit of war be cast out from his strong-hold in the heart, and nations be morally incapable of lifting up the sword against each other? And that a time will arrive when all this will be, we have the clearest evidence in the word of God for believing; for, in order to have war and all its concomitant evils completely

banished from the world, we need no more than to have the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord. And whenever this is the case, mankind—as we have already stated—will be too wise and too good to be guilty of injustice, and of thirsting after the life of one another.

2. By the evil principles, from which war proceeds, being destroyed. If any mystery hangs over the origin of war, the Apostle James has completely removed it when he says, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." The depraved heart, in its lusts and passions, is the origin of them all. Yes; the false pride, the love of power, ambition, avarice, false notions of honour, envy, and hatred, which naturally reign in the human heart, are of themselves enough to account for all the wars which have desolated the world, and have caused the sighs of millions of widows and orphans to ascend into the ears of the God of mercy, and each one of them a prayer for vengeance, or a loud cry for compassion. Now, if these evil passions can be subdued, and principles of the very opposite description and tendency can be implanted in the heart, and be brought to govern the conduct of men, then wars, as a matter of course, will "cease even unto the ends of the earth; the bow will be broken, the spear cut asunder, and the chariot be burnt in the fire." But have we any reason to believe that such a renovation of the human heart will, in general, at any period take place? Now, without referring minutely to the rea-

sons which lead us to believe that it will, we may remark that we have already ascertained, from a careful examination of the Scriptures, that Christianity is to become the universal religion of the world—that all its followers will be possessed of an eminent degree of holiness, and are all to be united in one faith, in one Lord, and in one Baptism; and that their subjection to the laws of Christ is not merely to be nominal, but real; and whenever this is the case, is it not evident that the evil passions to which we have already referred, will be displaced from their throne in the heart, whilst supreme love to God, and unfeigned love to men, with meekness, humility, forgiveness of injuries, and ardent benevolence, will exert an absolute sway over the whole soul? And, in order to put an end to war, it requires nothing more than this; for, let the heart be sanctified, and the precepts of the Gospel govern the conduct, and every thing in the shape of injustice on the one hand, and of contention on the other, will be removed; and as no one will hurt or destroy, wars, as a matter of course, must then come to an end.

3. By mankind, in their national capacity, avoiding all cause of contention. Whilst many individuals may be found in Christian countries, who, in their transactions with one another, have acted on the principles of the Gospel, yet no nation has yet been found systematically aiming at the enviable distinction of embodying these principles into all its laws, and carrying them out into all its dealings with others. On the contrary, a course of policy, the very opposite of this, has usually been adopted, and each has acted as if it could not flourish without supplanting the influence or injuring the interests of others. Hence a

system of policy, expediency, and management has sprung up, to which reference is usually made, in place of the Gospel, in deciding what is right and wrong between nations. But in the happy days when the kings, the rulers, and the statesmen of all nations shall be the genuine disciples of Christ, this expediency, policy, and management will be abandoned for the word of God; and the first and the last inquiry of all—in reference to every thing affecting their intercourse with one another—will be, "Is it wise? Is it righteous? Is it good? And does it accord with the dictates of that brotherly love which the Gospel enjoins?" And whenever this lovely spirit prevails, there will be an end to all instances of national aggression and unkindness; and among the many enterprises which may still occupy their attention, nothing will be undertaken that can be injurious to the interests of any, nor any thing be pursued but what will be for the good of the whole. The innate deformity of all acts of injustice and oppression will be clearly seen and universally admitted; and the principle that it is "Righteousness ALONE which exalteth a nation," will be as universally acted on. The false glare, and the delusive trappings with which war has been so long surrounded, will also be torn off from it by an enlightened and redeemed world, and will be seen in all its hideous deformity, and will be as universally detested as it has been universally practised. And wherever one human being may meet another, whether it be on the billow of the deep, or on the mountain's top, or in the throng of business, come they from whatever clime or country it may be under heaven, as the kind beaming eyes of both meet each

other, they will speak a language—though the tongue may be silent—which all know, and which will tell that nothing but "peace and good-will" reigns within. In this way, we doubt not, will the spirit and the horrors of war be universally banished from the world.

Let us now consider,

III. The happiness which will proceed from it.

1. One fruitful source of suffering will have come to an end. To enter minutely into the sufferings which have sprung from war, would go far beyond the due limits of a single discourse. Suffice it to say, that they include every thing which is found in the common ills of life, with very much that is peculiar to themselves. How great, for example, have often been the sufferings of the warriors themselves from the fatigue and privations which they have endured, from the perils which they have encountered, and from the deaths which they have died? But this is only one item in the long descriptive roll of misery which has sprung from the demon of war. What shall we say of the cities which it has pillaged and laid in ruins, beneath whose smoking rubbish have often been buried many of the unoffending, the aged, and the helpless? What cruelties has it also generally led to—cruelties which are too harrowing to the feelings to be here described? How many parents' hearts has it broken? How many untimely widows and orphans has it made? Who, indeed, can tell the tears which have been shed, or the misery which has been occasioned, even by but one of the celebrated battles of modern times? How much less, therefore, can we form any thing like an adequate calculation of the whole, since man first lifted up his hand against his

brother, and nations began to learn and to practise the art of war? But when peace shall smile on the whole family of man, this misery shall be unknown but as read of in the page of history; and death, in its ravages, will be confined to the ordinary course of events and the natural influence of age and disease; so that, come when it may, it will not be accompanied with the horrors of war, but, it may be, at the close of a long and useful life, amid all the comforts of home, and stript of its terrors by the joys of a blessed immortality.

2. One fruitful source of mental and moral degradation will have come to an end. The effect which war has invariably had on the mental and moral character of man has been awfully affecting. For the attention of all who have engaged in it has been so exclusively called off to it, that no time, nor inclination, nor convenience has been left for attending to the cultivation either of the understanding or the heart. Hence the grossest ignorance of almost every thing, except the art of human destruction, has generally prevailed among them; whilst immorality of every kind and in every degree has in general marked their character. Or, if examples of an opposite description may be found, they are so few in number, that they bear no proportion to the mass that are otherwise. Indeed, the natural and inevitable tendency of war may be regarded as certainly leading to the destruction of all the tender feelings of the heart—to the acquisition of habits of crime, which would otherwise never have been thought of—and to the imbibing of sentiments more in unison with the pagan and savage state than with the mild, equitable, and holy principles of the Gospel. And this debasing influence is

not confined to the individuals who are more especially engaged in it. In the course of time it extends more or less to the whole community, till at length the mania of war seize upon every heart, and the morals of the nation become so contaminated with the vices and erroneous principles which spring from it, that the spirit and purity of Christianity vanish before them. And there is not a single nation that has ever pursued war as a trade, or for any length of years, whose history does not affectingly illustrate the accuracy of this statement. But when war shall have ceased, and its art be learnt no more, and its implements of destruction shall no where be even seen, the nations will be saved from this intellectual and moral ruin, and full time be enjoyed for learning, and free scope be afforded for practising, the principles of the Gospel. The many sinks, too, of pollution and crime, which have sprung up from this unholy state of things, and which have spread, and are still spreading far and wide the worst sentiments and practices, shall then disappear, and leave the rising generation to grow up in knowledge and purity without being exposed to the numberless temptations which assail them in the present age. And what an advantage will thus be gained to the cause of righteousness and purity throughout the world.

3. One great hinderance to the due influence of the Gospel will have been completely removed. So long as any two, or any number of nations continue to war with one another, it is impossible that they can cherish or manifest to each other either the spirit or principles of the Gospel. The Gospel tells us "that we are not to be overcome of evil, but that we are to over-

come evil with good; that we are to love our enemies; that we are to bless them that curse us; that we are to do good to them that hate us; and that we are to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us;" but the spirit and maxims of war tell us that we are to render evil for evil, hatred for hatred, cursing for cursing; and that we are to seek, and even pray for, the destruction of our enemies. Now, in such a state of things, how is it possible for nations to manifest and cherish towards each other the spirit and principles of the Gospel? In place of these, how often do we find that all the malevolent dispositions of our fallen nature are cherished, and even applauded as virtues; and rancour and hatred between the contending parties become so deeply rooted, that generations must pass away before they can be completely removed? But when the prediction of the text shall have been fulfilled, this mountain of difficulty will have completely disappeared, and the most unrestricted intercourse between nations will take place, and the freest scope be afforded for the fullest manifestation of benevolence, kindness, and love. And in place of looking at each other with shyness or with an envious eye, the period will have arrived when even nations shall rejoice with those that rejoice, and mingle also their tears with those that weep. And what a delightful state of things must then exist throughout the world, when the principles of the Gospel shall thus mould the characters and influence the conduct of all the nations of the earth!

4. All things will be conducted on the principles of benevolence and justice. In reading over the history of past days, how often do we find that whole provinces

or countries have been laid under contribution, or plundered from their rightful owners, by the power or terror of the conqueror's sword. But such brutal transactions will never stain the history of the world during the Millennial age; for it is the age in which they are "neither to hurt nor destroy." The very idea of seizing any thing "by force of arms" as it is now termed, will have perished from the mind; for the weapons of destruction will be known only among the wreck of things that were; and the dispositions in the heart from which it sprang will have been completely subdued by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. It will then be emphatically the reign of righteousness on the earth; for benevolence and justice will occupy the throne of the heart, and every man will do unto others as he wishes them to do to himself. All fear of outrage, insincerity, and dishonesty will be gone, and perfect confidence be restored between man and man, and nation and nation. And when this is the case, what an accession to the happiness of the world will it give? A great part of the misery of social life is found to arise from the insincerity and dishonesty of man with man; but then these, with all the precautionary measures which are now necessary in order to protect us against them, will have ceased to perplex and harass the mind. And even suspicion, whose tortures are sometimes greater even than seen and known injury, and which now seems so natural to man, will never be permitted to disturb the tranquillity of the soul; for there will be none to make afraid. Christ shall have sat as judge among the nations, and shall have rebuked many people, and they shall have beat their swords into ploughshares and their

spears into pruning-hooks ; and nation shall have ceased to war with nation—yea, they shall not even learn war any more. O thrice happy state of things, when this curse of the world shall have so completely disappeared that they will not even learn the art any more ! But what a revolution must take place in men's minds and conduct before this can arrive ? Therefore let us endeavour to hasten on this part of the Millennial glory and happiness,

1. By carefully cultivating a peaceable and forgiving disposition. Constituted as the human mind is, a mild, amiable, and forgiving disposition may be said to be essentially necessary to our own well-being ; and it was in an eminent sense the disposition of him who was meek and lowly in heart, and who has in all things set us an example that we should follow his steps. For if ever any one had just cause for acting on the principle of retaliation, and of remembering injuries, it was He ; for never were justice and benevolence so outraged as they were in reference to him. But it is concerning him it is said, that "when he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously ;" and whose dying prayer was a prayer for forgiveness to his murderers. O that his followers had imitated him more in this winning perfection of his nature. It should also never be forgotten that a flourishing state of piety, and a wrathful and revengeful temper, are quite incompatible with each other ; and it is a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price. Let us endeavour, therefore, my brethren, to live up to our profession and principles, by showing mankind that true

greatness of character consists in the exercise of benevolence and justice, and in the moral inability to return an injury.

In our intercourse with mankind also, whoever and whatever they may be, let us be slow to wrath, and ever ready to forgive; and thus we shall best illustrate the distinguishing features of the Christian dispensation, as a dispensation of "peace on earth and good-will towards men;" and thus, too, we shall most effectually put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, who would persuade us that it is impossible to live on such principles as these. The world is too wicked, say they, to admit of it. But if it is so now, is it not an important question, what is the most likely way to make it better? Now, who is there who does not know that the most effectual way to remove mistakes and prejudices on all practical subjects, is to manifest their practicability by giving oracular proof of them? Let us therefore endeavour in this, as well as in every other respect, to be examples to all around us, and cultivate a kind, amiable, unoffending, and forgiving disposition towards the whole family of man, that we show ourselves to be followers of Him who is emphatically styled "the Prince of Peace."

2. By discountenancing the manifestation of malevolent dispositions in all others. It is exceedingly to be wished that all persons entrusted in any way with the management of children and the training of youth would take up correct views on this subject. The principle of retaliation, of pride, of false honour, and the love of power, have entered too deeply into the formation of the character of the present age to permit the entertaining of a hope with regard to many on this

subject. But if individuals or nations, on the reception of injuries, whether supposed or real, will still involve themselves and others in all the horrors and evils of war, let them obtain no encouragement from the Church; but, as the followers of the meek and the lowly Jesus, let all her members show them a more excellent way for redressing a nation's wrongs, and for promoting the peace and welfare of the world. Particularly let parents exercise a careful watch over the children whom God has committed to their care, and endeavour by every means to check the manifestation of any malevolent disposition which they may see in them, and to instil into their minds such principles of justice and kindness as will lead them to make it a study to contribute to the well-being of all, or as will prevent them from knowingly or wilfully injuring or offending any. And if the rising generation were uniformly brought up on this principle, how soon might the description of the text be fully realized; and swords, and spears, and the other implements of human destruction, be seen no more in Christian nations.

3. By using every effort universally to diffuse the principles of justice and benevolence. Were the question asked—Why is it that nations rush into war with one another? The simplest and truest answer which we could give to it would be, because they are not just in their dealings, nor benevolent in their feelings to each other. For, were they so, they would find no cause nor inclination to rush into such horrid strife. How, then, can war be effectually prevented? Why, very easily; for it requires no costly sacrifice, nor any extraordinary physical exertion; but merely that all do justice, love mercy, and walk hum-

bly with God. Yes; under the influence of these principles, the dispositions in the heart, and the actions in the life, from which wars have universally proceeded, will be subdued and shunned; and mankind, in place of hunting each other as the beasts of the forest do their prey, will find that it is their interest as well as their duty to live in peace and love. And as these principles can be disseminated only through the instrumentality of the Gospel, let us endeavour to send it as far and wide as mankind are to be found, that the roar of the cannon and the groans of the battle-field may no more be heard; and that the tears of the widow and the orphan may cease to flow over the husband and the father who have thus been hurried to an untimely grave; and that the human bosom may be no more torn by the fierce passions which war either enkindles or fosters, nor the human character be polluted and degraded by the crimes to which it has ever led. And, most happy and most honoured in the future history of the world will that nation be that is freest from the shedding of human blood, and whose greatness is the greatness which springs from the exercise of justice and benevolence, and whose trophies are those which are won in bringing the ignorant and the lost of far distant climes to the knowledge of God and the salvation of the Gospel; and whose praises are not those of the warrior over his fallen antagonist, but those that are borne in the thanksgivings to heaven of those who are thus saved and thus blessed. In contrast with these, how sickening are the honours, and how fearful the responsibilities, of war!

DISCOURSE VI.

GENERAL HAPPINESS OF MANKIND DURING THE MILLENNIUM.

Is. lxv. 18, 19. Be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

We have been so long accustomed to see and to hear of the operation of wickedness, and the ten thousand forms in which misery has been, and still is, blended with the lot of man, that we are apt to be exceedingly incredulous as to the world's ever being much better than it is at present. It is an evil world; and as the curse of God rests on it, it is therefore, in the opinion of many, likely to continue so till the present system of things shall have come to an end; when the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. But a very little attention to the subject is enough, we apprehend, to lead us to perceive the fallacy of a great deal of this kind of reasoning, and to shake off a great deal of the apathy which springs from it, and to take the deepest interest on the one hand, and to experience the highest satisfaction on the other, in every thing that can contribute to the improvement of man in knowledge and piety. Granting—for who can deny it?—that evil meets us at every stage and in every avenue of life, yet where is the

accurate observer, either of human nature or of human society, who does not see that a great part of the ills of life arise from our own folly on the one hand and the wickedness of others on the other? Now, if this folly can be removed, and this wickedness can be banished, is it not a fair inference that the great causes of this world's misery shall be put out of the way; and since the Gospel is designed and eminently calculated to make men happy, whenever it shall exercise its sanctifying and heavenly influence over all, that the world must be much better than it is at present? For, not only will many of the sources of suffering have disappeared, but the influence of piety in elevating the character will be much greater, and be much more directly felt in alleviating the unavoidable sorrows, and in enhancing all the real blessings of life; whilst the blessing of God will descend in a richer abundance, and in a more uninterrupted stream than has ever yet descended on fallen man. Not that this world will ever be changed into heaven, or that its peace and beauty will ever equal the peace which reigned within and without, or the beauty which every where smiled on man in his state of innocence. No; so far as these are concerned, the present state will be, to the very last, but one of imperfection; so that the hope of the Millennial believer, like that of him in the present age, will still reach into that which is within the vail; and though God will have created Jerusalem a rejoicing, and his people a joy, and will rejoice in her, and joy in his people, and the voice of weeping or of crying be no more heard in her, yet still the glory of the earthly will give place to the glory of the heavenly; and the ardent aspiration of all will still be after the coming of the day

of God—"looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" in the heavens. But though this will doubtless be the case, yet the text, as well as the state of things which will then prevail, lays a foundation for the most ardent anticipation that a much greater degree of happiness will be enjoyed during the Millennium than has been enjoyed since man fell. This will arise: I. From the removal, to a great extent, if not completely, of many of the causes of misery which exist in the present day. II. From relative and social connexions. III. From the more abundant possession and enjoyment of every thing which constitutes the true happiness of man. Let us contemplate, then, the happiness of the Millennium as it will arise,

I. From the removal, to a great extent, if not completely, of many of the causes of misery which exist in the present day.

1. Poverty. In looking over the long list of ills with which the human family has been afflicted, no one can fail to observe that this has been one of the fruitful sources of much personal and family distress; and very often, too, of great mental and moral degradation. For, amid the distress and humiliation which are often attendant on poverty, there has generally been a great destitution of the means of mental and moral improvement; so that the child of want has often suffered as much in his character as he has done in his outward circumstances. It has been no unusual thing, therefore, to find the poor cursing God, and putting forth their hands to steal. Or if, through the tender mercy of God to them, they have not been permitted to run to this excess of folly and crime, yet it does not admit of a doubt that poverty has greatly aggravated the

pressure of all the other ills of life. For where is it that disease and death appear in their most affecting and pallid form but in the abodes of the indigent? And who are the first to feel, and the most to suffer, from any general calamity but the poor? But, in reflecting on this subject, how is it possible to overlook the consideration of the causes from which poverty has usually sprung? Now, even admitting that the hand of God, in the exercise of his sovereignty, has sometimes laid this as a judgment on men; yet, is it not beyond the possibility of contradiction evident that it has usually sprung from indolence, imprudence, wickedness, or extravagance on the part of the sufferer himself, or from injustice and oppression on the part of others? But as the principles of the Gospel are to form the characters and to guide the actions of men during the Millennium, poverty, so far as it springs from the individuals themselves, and from others, will have entirely disappeared; and if it should ever then visit any of the children of men as a judgment from God, its pressure will be so alleviated by the consolations of the Gospel, and by the sympathy and kindness of all around, that it will have lost nearly all its distressing features, and will be found eminently conducive to the perfection of all the Christian graces in the soul, and for preparing it for the enjoyment of the riches of heaven. And how much must the happiness of the world be increased above that even of the most highly favoured portions of it in the present day, when it will not contain a family, or an individual, who is suffering from penury or want!

2. Losses and disappointments in life. Of these, too, it may be remarked, that in some form or other

they have been the common lot of man; for no rank nor condition in life has been altogether free from them. And how much individual and family distress has often sprung from them! And how many, through the influence which they have had on their spirits and health, have sunk to an untimely grave! Or if such has not been their effect, what affecting changes in rank and condition have they often produced! Sometimes bringing down those who rolled in affluence and ease, and even swayed the sceptre over kingdoms, to a condition of abject dependence and precarious subsistence. But during the Millennial age such reverses as these will probably never be experienced nor witnessed; for the imprudence, and inconsideration, and the want of due foresight on the one hand, and the insincerity and dishonesty on the other, from which they have usually proceeded, under the influence of religious principle will have entirely disappeared; and wisdom and honour, integrity and kindness, will regulate the transactions of all. Now, think of the endless forms and degrees in which disappointments and losses at present meet us in the various undertakings of life, and the bitterness of soul which usually springs from them, and then think of a state of society in which these will be utterly unknown—in which the pang that is occasioned by blighted hopes, forgotten promises, and violated engagements, shall never be felt; and then you can easily conceive what an amazing accession to the happiness of man must spring from the absence of this fruitful source of human ill.

3. Oppressive laws and the wickedness of rulers. Ever since nations increased, and pride and ambition began to sway the counsels of men, there has been an asto-

nishing tendency on the part of the rulers and the great of a land, to act unequally and oppressively towards all that were under them. So that, in place of viewing themselves but as so many individuals of a community, they have too often acted as if the community were made for them—as if their word were always to be law—and as if the property and lives of all were in their hands. And who can tell the tears that have been shed, and the misery which has been suffered, from the oppression and wickedness of the kings and rulers of the world? "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear,"—says Solomon, Prov. xxviii. 15, "so is a wicked ruler over the poor people." And though the language is strong, yet it does not go beyond the reality of the case; for there is not a calamity with which man can be afflicted in this lower world that has not in innumerable instances sprung from this single source. But in those happy days, when the principles of the Gospel shall have formed the characters, and shall guide the actions of all, human rights will not only be well understood, but universally respected and upheld; so that, when God shall have created Jerusalem a rejoicing, and his people a joy, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, unjust laws shall have disappeared, and tyranny and oppression shall no where exist. The rod of the wicked shall no longer rest upon the lot of the righteous; for it shall be broken never again to be repaired. Yea, the oppressor himself, like a potter's vessel, shall be dashed in pieces. Yes, the kings and rulers of the Millenium, unlike the Cæsars and the Herods either of the present or past ages, will be distinguished for their wisdom and justice, their purity and uprightness, and every thing that can adorn the

Christian character; so that, in place of being, as they have so often been, curses to their people and to the world, they will live and rule but to bless, and by their example, influence, and wealth, to be nursing fathers to the Church. And when this happy state of things shall have been introduced, and "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," then all oppression on the one hand, and discontent on the other, will have entirely passed away. And what an accession will this also occasion to the happiness of the world!

4. The impiety of relatives and friends. To all who allow correct views of eternity, and the inseparable connexion which exists between our conduct in the present world and our condition there, to guide their sentiments and regulate their feelings with regard to others, nothing can be so distressing as to see open and incontestible evidences of impiety in those who are connected with us by the tenderest ties. What language, for example, can describe a parent's grief when he sees his son or daughter bent only on destruction, and every day they live to be only approaching nearer and nearer to "the tribulation and anguish, the indignation and wrath," which will come upon them to the uttermost? Or who can describe the heaviness of heart which the pious mother feels when she beholds the downward course of him whom she has borne, and thinks that she has borne him only to be the associate of the unprincipled and the vicious in this world, and of Satan and his angels in the next? Under the pressure of this anguish, how many a parent's heart has been broken, whose gray hairs have at last been brought down with

sorrow to the grave. On the other hand, how often has filial affection been put to the severest trial through parental impenitence and unkindness? And who can describe the anguish that has been felt, and the briny tears that have flowed, as the dutiful child—ripe, it may be, herself for heaven—has surrounded the death-bed, or has visited the grave of an impenitent father, and the visions of the eternal world have come vividly across the mind? And how agonizing must that grief be, which on such occasions can find relief only in such pathetic and unavailing exclamations as these:—"O had he but died in the faith and hope of the Gospel, how gladly could I have parted with him, and how joyfully could I have looked forward to my own death as certain to lead me to enjoy a father's love, and to share a fath r's happiness in heaven! But he died a stranger to the grace of Christ, and therefore I can never hope to meet him there!" When the friend, too, with whom we have taken sweet counsel together in the common intercourse and innocent joys of life, dies a stranger to Christ and an enemy to God, what a pang does it send to the heart; for the separation which death has occasioned between us, we know must be eternal. But during the Millennium, if such separations take place at all, the number will be so small that they will bear no comparison with those that are otherwise; and in innumerable instances the heart of the parent, the child, and the friend will remain a stranger to such anguish as that to which we have referred, and be delighted with the well-grounded expectation that their union and happiness are such as will endure for ever; and what an accession to

the happiness of man in the various associations of life must this afford!

5. The Divine curse on the earth and elements for man's sake. Ever since God pronounced the earth cursed for man's sake, what care and toil has it cost the husbandman to make it productive, except it be in thorns and briers. How great a proportion of it also still continues barren? And what devastations and ruin have often been produced by the earthquake and the storm? But during the Millennium it would seem that much of the curse is likely to be removed, and a great deal of the primeval beauty and fertility of the earth to be regained. Thus the Sacred Scriptures represent "the wilderness and the solitary place as being made glad, and the desert as rejoicing and blossoming as the rose. Instead of the thorn, is to come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier, the myrtle;" the earth is to be "as a field which the Lord hath blessed." And then, as the Psalmist has beautifully described it, "shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us;" that is, then, in such abundance as has never hitherto been seen, shall the earth yield her increase, and the blessing of God accompany the efforts of man as it has never done before; and if we would know when this shall take place, he himself has informed us that it will be when "all people shall praise him." And so great is the difference which will exist between the then state of things and that which was before, and so happy will the change be, that the prophet says, "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." But in what form and in what manner this change will be produced, it is impossible for us now

exactly to ascertain. Suffice it to say, that it is the blessing of the Lord alone that causes the earth to bring forth, and to bud, and to bear so that there shall be enough for man and for beast. Hence all that is necessary in order to realize to its fullest extent the glowing language of prophecy on this subject is, that this blessing should be communicated in a more abundant measure. And whenever it is so, more congenial seasons than those with which we are now acquainted may be universally enjoyed, and much of the toil that is now necessary, and the anxiety which is now felt in agricultural pursuits, and the damage which is often sustained in them, will be entirely unknown; so that degrading toil, and alarming catastrophies, and seasons of want be no more the lot of man in a present world; and when this is the case, how greatly must its happiness have increased!

6. Sickness. In reference to this, also, a vast change will no doubt take place throughout the whole world during the Millennial age. For in reference to many of the diseases with which the human family is at present afflicted, as they have their origin either in poverty, vice, intemperance, or imprudence, when these are removed they will no doubt cease to exist. The employments of mankind, too, as they will be all such as are compatible with an eminent degree of knowledge and piety, will be a great deal more conducive to health than many which are now followed. And if we add to these causes of the diminution of disease a superior degree of congeniality, which, in all probability, will be communicated to the seasons and climates of the earth, and which will render it every where more salubrious, there cannot be a doubt that

the inhabitants of the world will then be far freer from disease than we can now well conceive. Nor are we without the positive testimony of Scripture that this will be the case; for, in the verse which follows the text it is said, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." That is—so far at least as we have been able to comprehend its meaning—deaths in childhood and premature old age will then be unknown; the span of life also will be considerably extended; and the evening of their days, in place of manifesting the decrepitude and feebleness of old age in the present day, will find them vigorous in mind and sound in body, and waiting in faith and hope till their change come. And when it does come, except in the few solitary instances of the sinner, death will be calm and peaceful as a summer's setting sun. In consequence also of the superior degree of piety which all will then possess, and the delightful conceptions of heaven which all will then form, the mind will entirely acquiesce in such dispensations of Providence; so that if a tear be shed over the lifeless remains of the relative or the friend, it will be but the tear which springs from the overflowings of delight in the heart as it thinks on the exaltation and happiness which the spirit has reached; so that the voice of weeping and of crying shall no more be heard throughout all lands. Who then that thinks on these things can help exclaiming—O thrice happy world! when the sources of the misery with which it is now so much afflicted

shall have been thus extensively and universally removed.

II. From relative and social connexions. Great as will be the accession to human happiness by the removal of the various sources or causes of misery to which we have referred, yet it will not be the only means by which the greater felicity of that period will be effected and secured. God has so constituted us as to be dependent for a great measure of our present happiness on our relative and social connexions; and these will be found to be then productive of far more happiness than now springs from them. And of these, the first which claims our attention is,

1. The conjugal. The glorious and infinitely wise author of our nature has declared that "it is not good for man to be alone." Hence, with the view of securing and enhancing his happiness, he has given us the institution of marriage. And who that is aware of the innumerable ways in which it contributes to the welfare of the individuals who are so connected, as well as to the peace and happiness of society at large, does not readily acknowledge that the wisdom and goodness of God to man are eminently illustrated by this single institution. How often is it also used as a figure to illustrate the intimate and delightful union which exists between God and his people? How many delightful associations have also in and through life sprung from it? Associations, too, which have not only enhanced the happiness of this world, but in a certain sense even that in the world to come; for there cannot be a doubt that the associations and relations which have been formed and conducted on

earth on the principles of religion, will be found to have extended their influence in enhancing even the happiness of heaven. But, owing to the imprudence, the sinful imperfections of men, and the other causes of misery which operate upon us in the present day, how often do we find that the objects of this institution have either not been attained, or, if they have, it has only been in a very limited degree. Piety, it may be, has not been regarded in forming it; its grace has not been sought to enable us to perform its duties and to sustain its trials; nor has it been permitted to shed its purifying and elevating influence over all its joys. Uncongenial dispositions, too, have been often united, which have turned its peace into discord, its sweets into bitterness, and its joy into sorrow. Infidelity, too, to its obligations, has not unfrequently severed its union, and put an end to all its happiness; whilst disease and death have either withered or put an untimely end to its joys, and have presented us with some of the most affecting instances of human grief which the world has ever seen. But during the happy days of which we speak, the various causes which have operated in diminishing the happiness which springs from it, will have greatly disappeared; whilst piety will regulate its formation, and purify, and elevate, and give permanency to all its joys. And what happiness must spring from a union that is so intimate, when it is universally formed and conducted on such principles, when disease shall have in a great measure ceased its ravages—when death shall have lost many of his most distressing concomitants—when both the husband and the wife shall be rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God—and when the blessed-

ness of heaven will succeed the happiness which they have enjoyed below!

2. The parental and filial. These, too, are relations which have a most intimate connexion with our happiness in a present world. For whilst the world lasts, it will be a true saying that "A wise son maketh a glad father; whilst a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." The happiness of parents, indeed, is so closely connected with that of their children, and that of the latter, too, so dependent on the former, that they mutually affect each other. And what an interesting sight is a happy family circle walking in the ways of wisdom, and the whole of whose efforts are but to please and to bless! But how often has the parent's heart been wrung with the bitterest disappointment and anguish by filial disobedience or profligacy? And, on the other hand, how often has filial happiness been marred by the exhibition of parental folly and impiety? During the happy days, however, which await the world, both of these will have disappeared; and parents will every where experience the joy which springs from seeing their children walking in the truth; whilst they will be saved the heart-rending distress which invariably flows from parental impiety. And when evil example in parents, and disobedience and impiety in children, shall cease, and when piety will shed her benign influence over all the duties and joys of domestic life; and when the family on earth shall exhibit a delightful representation of the family in heaven, how greatly will the domestic happiness of man have been increased; and what an accession to this most delightful branch of

the whole happiness of a present state will this occasion!

3. The neighbourly and friendly. On these connexions also, our happiness is not a little dependent. For when all around us live in the exercise of all the kind affections, and obliging and courteous attentions which the Gospel enjoins, it is delightful to dwell among them. But, on the other hand, when nothing but strife and ill-will prevail, how unpleasant is it! But when religion forms the characters, and regulates the dealings of man with man, these will disappear, and all will dwell together in harmony and love, in the exercise of mutual esteem, and free from jealousy and envy. Individual interests, too, will then never be pursued to the injury of those of others, or of the general good. On the contrary, a due and benevolent regard to the welfare of the whole will enter into all plans and all undertakings; and the principle which has been so long acted upon—"Let every man do the best he can for himself," will be discarded as at variance with the principles of the Gospel, and with its kind and benevolent spirit. The friendships, too, which will then be formed, will be of a purer nature, and of greater strength and permanency than those of the present day; for they will be all formed with a view to piety and eternity, and to the promotion of one another's spiritual welfare and usefulness. The duties of friendship will also be regularly and faithfully performed; and in the very performance of them, the soul will experience the highest satisfaction and delight. Now, when the various cities, and towns, and villages of the world shall contain a population so united and kindly affectioned one to another, how

much must the happiness of man be increased! For every thing in the shape of injustice and unkindness, and even of coldness in feeling, and of distance in manners, will have disappeared, and all will dwell together as brethren and fellow-heirs of the grace of everlasting life.

III. From the greater possession and enjoyment of every thing which constitutes the true happiness of man.

1. Mental vigour and moral purity. Ever since man fell, he has sadly mistaken the sources of his happiness; and one grand error which almost all have committed with regard to it, has been, that they have sought it without in place of within themselves. Hence outward good, and the gratification of some of the low passions of our depraved nature, have appeared as if they were adorned with ten thousand charms; whilst mental and moral excellence have been greatly neglected. But what is it that constitutes the true superiority of one man above another? Not his outward circumstances, but his intellectual and moral character. And the man that is greatest in this respect, will always be greatest in happiness, and in the estimation of Him who looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart. Owing, however, to the operation of sin and disease, and the other causes of misery which exist in the present day, there cannot be a doubt that the mind is greatly enfeebled from what it would otherwise be, so that its energies are soon exhausted; and it is rare, indeed, that it reaches to any eminent degree of vigour, so as to take a wide or full range in the various departments of knowledge which are laid open before it. Moral excellence, too,

at least to any great extent, has been but seldom attained. The standard of obedience has been low, and the character of most even of the people of God has been exceedingly defective; and hence their happiness has been also very limited and fluctuating. But in the days of the Millennium, the mind will be found to have participated largely in the happy change which will have taken place. Its vigour and capacity will likely be far greater than in the present day; whilst, through the superior degree of holiness which it will have attained, it will be freer from the causes of distraction, and be admirably fitted for seeking and enjoying its happiness in God. And just in proportion as it does this, and rises above the low and grovelling pursuits which have for so long a period occupied the chief attention of man, just so will it rise in the scale of happiness, and act in unison with its high and eternal destiny. And as moral principle will preside over and direct the exercise of all its powers—and as the great adversary of man will then have no influence over it, every accession to its capacity will be also an accession to its happiness, whilst every thing around it will conspire to facilitate its progress; and when this is the case, it is impossible to conjecture to what intellectual and moral heights men may reach even in a present world.

2. Knowledge, and opportunities and leisure for cultivating it. Of all the sources of happiness, so far at least as this world is concerned, with which we are acquainted, there are none which can be compared with knowledge. Hence, intellectual pursuits, if they are under the direction of moral principle, and connected with moral objects, have never failed to impart

to the mind the highest delight. Now, whatever doubts, if any can be entertained, as to some parts of the Millennial felicity, there can be none in reference to this. For, in reference to the most exalted of all knowledge—that which leaves all other branches infinitely behind it—we mean the knowledge of God—it is to cover the earth as the waters do the channel of the sea, so that all shall know him, even from the least to the greatest. Yes; ignorance of God, and of Jesus, and of the plan of salvation, will be banished from the world. And when the Holy Spirit is poured out in his Millennial fulness, and the Bible is in the hands of all men, and is made the subject of constant study, how vastly superior is the knowledge of Millennial believers likely to be above ours, particularly as it relates to practice and experience? The comfort and leisure, too, which all will then enjoy, will be eminently conducive to intellectual pursuits; and as science will then be the handmaid of religion, so all its discoveries and illustrations, while they expand the mind, will tend also to elevate the moral character; as they will throw a richer glory around Him who is seen, and studied, and enjoyed in all things. The knowledge of all ages will also then be concentrated into one; and as its value will then be much more justly appreciated, so the facilities for acquiring it will be much greater than have ever existed before. Yes; perish what may amid the shaking of the nations which is still future, the art and the labours of the printer never will. In place of this, as the thirst after knowledge will have astonishingly increased, so the demand for the means of gratifying it will be proportionably great. For, let it be recollected, it is the World that will then

be enlightened, and holy, and happy; and that will be advancing with unparalleled rapidity in the progress of knowledge and piety. Every branch, too, of knowledge will be eagerly cultivated; and when the sages and divines of the Millennium are the teachers, what sublimity and accuracy of thought, and brilliancy of illustration, may not be expected from them; and what a flood of holy light from the heights of Zion, and the halls of literature and science, will then be poured on the world! And how happy must all then be, who enjoy such privileges, and have reached such attainments!

3. Religious exercises. These, too, are another source of our purest and most elevated joys; as they bring us into the closest union with Him, who is the Father of our spirits and the author of every good and perfect gift,—as they draw out into exercise every holy affection of the soul—and as they bring to us all our spiritual supplies. As to the exercises of the Millennial Church, there is every reason to believe that they will be the same as to kind as those of the present day. The great difference will be in the worshippers themselves—the superior degree of spirituality of mind which they will have attained—and the frequency of their approaches unto God. The closet will be more frequented—the Scriptures will be more earnestly searched—prayer will be a frequent exercise—and the voice of praise will be frequently heard in the habitations of the righteous. Social religious exercises among families and friends will also likely form part of every day's employment and happiness. But, of all the days of the week, the Sabbath will still possess the pre-eminence. And how holy and delightful will its

exercises be, when all hearts will be eminently adapted to them, and will be longing and thirsting after God? The Sabbath then will not be a weariness, nor will its services be a toil or a burden. Cold hearts, and lifeless frames, and cases of spiritual desertion, will also in all probability have disappeared from among the righteous, so that they will be always joyful, and prepared for communion with God. How solemn, thoughtful, and engaged will every worshipping assembly then be! How near to heaven will all feel themselves to be—and how much of heaven's happiness will then be enjoyed, when all are worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and when every heart is filled with his love! In place, then, of longing for the Sabbath to be gone, and its exercises to close, that we may hurry to the farm or to merchandise, like the three chosen apostles who beheld the transfiguration of our Lord, they are more likely to linger around the sacred spot, and to long for the Sabbath in the skies. Yea, such will be the delight which the soul will experience in the exercises of devotion and communion with God, that nothing will satisfy it but an eternity of both, when its "days of praise shall ne'er be past, while life, and thought, and being last, or immortality endures."

4. The gracious presence and blessing of God. These are doubtless the spring of all our happiness; for without them no exercise can be blissful, nor any situation be calculated to make us truly happy. Now, we have every reason to believe that the enjoyment of the gracious presence of God will then be the happy lot of all his people. They will continually walk in the light of his countenance, and go on from strength to strength, till each of them shall appear before him in

glory. His blessing too, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow, will continually rest upon them, and upon all that they have—upon every work of their hands, and upon every possession of their happy lot; so that the voice of weeping and of crying shall no more be heard among them; for God will have created Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, and he will rejoice in Jerusalem, and will joy in his people. The days of their mourning will be ended, and all that will be necessary to complete their happiness will be the unveiled vision of heaven, and the more intimate fellowship of God, of angels, and of the spirits of the just made perfect.

In closing this sketch of the general happiness of man during the Millennium, how delightful is it to think, as we reflect on the present misery of the world, that its worst days are past, and its best all to come. Yes, the darkest part of the night of its oppressions and sorrows is ended, and the dawn of its brightest days, like the golden rays of the rising sun seen on the mountain's top, may already be discovered. May every day as it passes witness it shining brighter and brighter, till the night shall be wholly past, and the day-star arise in every heart throughout this wide world. But, that this may soon be the case, let us all, my beloved brethren, come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. For, in order that the glory and happiness of the Millennium may be introduced, we must all strive to help it forward in the use of every appointed means for diffusing abroad the knowledge of the Gospel, and for bringing all within our reach to the obedience of the faith. Parents should do this with the greatest ardour and delight, in contri-

buting to the various efforts that are being made for purifying the Church from her errors—for raising her from her lethargy—for sending the Gospel to every nation under heaven; and, above all, in endeavouring to raise the religious character and practice of their children far beyond that of the present day. For it is just in proportion as we see the rising generation becoming more holy, and more devoted, that we see the indisputable evidence of the approach of the Millennium. To the young, too, this subject should be one of peculiar interest and delight. For on them will soon devolve all the efforts that are necessary to be made, and all the responsibilities in connexion with them in order to carry on the Church to her Millennial glory and happiness. Let the young members of the Church in particular be entreated to lay this matter very seriously to heart, and let each with the prophet be led to say—"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." And then when you rest from your labours, it will be in the enjoyment of the happy conviction that, in serving your God, you have served your generation; and also with the delightful prospect that your descendants will be among the happy number from whom the voice of weeping and of crying shall be no more heard. "May God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that his way may be known upon earth, his saving health among all nations. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy. Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise thee."

DISCOURSE VII.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL, THE INSTRUMENTAL MEANS BY WHICH IT IS TO BE INTRODUCED.

MARK xvi. 15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

HAVING in our previous discourses directed your attention to the leading features of the Church, and of the general happiness of mankind during the Millennial age, we come now more particularly to consider the means by which this great and happy change is to be effected. Now, as this change, so far as the character of man is concerned, is of an intellectual and moral nature, and as it is to be produced through human instrumentality, the means for producing it must evidently be adapted to it, and be such as men can universally bring to bear on the whole human family; for if there is no adaptation in the means to the end, or if the means are such as man cannot use, so far as he is concerned, the end of course can never be reached. But blessed be the God of all our mercies that, since it has pleased him to employ human agency in extending his spiritual kingdom over the world, the means which he has appointed them to use are of the most simple nature, and at the same time of the most powerful efficacy—requiring the operation of no cumbersome machinery of man's wisdom, nor any expen-

sive display of human wealth or grandeur; but merely the exhibition and enforcement of Divine truth as the channel through which the Holy Spirit operates on the minds of men. Yes, all that is necessary is the preaching of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God to the nations, and by this simple but powerful instrument, the prey will in due time be taken from the destroyer of man; for though "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual, yet they are nevertheless mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

The words of the text, as you are well aware, contain the command of our risen Lord to his disciples for evangelizing the world. Before this, their exertions were confined entirely to their fellow-countrymen; but now the world was to engage their attention, and to be the field of their labours; and till every knee on earth shall have bowed down, and confessed Christ as Lord to the glory of the Father, this command will never cease to be binding on all his followers. According to this command, the only means which man is to use for gaining this universal conquest of the human heart, is preaching. Yes; like himself, his ministers are to be only the heralds of mercy, and the only weapon which they are to wield in their conflicts with the God of this world is the Gospel. And wherever this is presented in purity and truth to the understanding and heart of man, it will never be left wholly without the testimony of the Spirit; and whenever he is poured out in his fulness,

nothing shall stand before it. Nations shall be born as in a day; and the glad shouts of an astonished and praising world shall universally be heard, saying, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the power of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Our object on the present occasion is to consider the universal preaching of the Gospel, as the means for introducing the Millennium. And in directing your attention to this subject, we shall consider, 1st, What it is to preach the Gospel. 2d, The adaptation of this as an instrument for enlightening and converting the world.

I. What it is to preach the Gospel. In order that we may understand what this is, it is necessary that we first ascertain what the Gospel is; for, until we have a full and distinct idea of this, we can never understand what it is to preach it. Now, in its most appropriate signification we remark, that it means merely "good news, or good tidings." And if we would know what these are, we have only to attend to the angelic message to the shepherds in Bethlehem, contained in Luke ii. 10, 11, "Fear not, for behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In its original application, then, we perceive that it refers merely to the incarnation and birth of Christ. But in a more enlarged sense, it is used to signify the whole system of Christianity; every part of which is necessary to be believed and brought into practice in order that it may have its legitimate and designed influence over us. This is evidently its signification, when the great Apostle of the Gentiles says that he was "separated

unto the Gospel of God"—meaning not merely that he was set apart to announce to the world the birth of the Saviour, but also to teach the whole system of godliness. And this, we apprehend, is its precise signification in the text. And in order that we may perceive how well, in this enlarged sense of the term, the Gospel is adapted to accomplish the object for which it is appointed, let us view it,

1. As to its disclosures concerning the nature and character of God. These subjects, it may be remarked, are of the very first importance to man; as they regulate all his sentiments both with regard to the past, the present, and the future, and give a character to all his hopes and fears. Now, in reference to these, the disclosures of the Gospel are not only fuller and more distinct than what are to be gained from all other quarters, but they possess a grandeur which is altogether peculiar to themselves. Under the Old Testament dispensation, though God made himself known, both by express revelations and by many transcendent works, yet even these fell short, both in point of clearness and fulness, of the New Testament disclosures. Thus, in the simple announcement that "God is a Spirit," it throws more light on the essence of Deity than had ever been thrown before. Its testimony, too, as to a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, is so full and complete, that it is impossible to set it aside without our exalting our own wisdom above that of God. How indescribably glorious also is the character with which it surrounds him in the work of Redemption? The very plan itself it represents as a manifestation of his manifold wisdom, inasmuch as it shows how that God can

be just, whilst at the same time he is the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. In the execution also of this plan, through the gift and sufferings of his own son for us, he has given a manifestation of his love, with which nothing, either in heaven above or on earth beneath, can be compared. And what an illustration of his infinite holiness, inflexible justice, and unbending faithfulness to his threatenings, have we in the vicarious sufferings and atoning death of his well beloved son? How affectingly do they show us that he cannot let the guilty go unpunished, and at the same time sustain the moral government of the universe? But when the sacrifice for sin is his own son in the likeness of man, and he appears as laying the iniquity of us all upon him, and as ready "with him freely to give us all things," how indescribably rich does he appear in goodness and mercy to this fallen world? Under the Old Testament dispensation, much of this might, no doubt, be discovered in its various typical sacrifices and ceremonial observances; but it is in the Gospel they appear with unveiled splendour, and the whole character of God is set forth so as to impress with awe, animate with hope, and inspire with love. Yes,

> "In the grace which rescued man,
> His brightest form of glory shines;
> Here in the Cross 'tis fairest drawn,
> In precious blood and crimson lines.
> Here his whole name appears complete;
> Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,
> Which of the letters best are writ,
> The power, the wisdom, or the love."

So that if we would see the nature and character

of God fully illustrated, we must study him as he is revealed in the Gospel, which is here commanded to be preached to every creature.

2. As a revelation of mercy to the WHOLE family of man. Under the Old Testament dispensation, to the believing and spiritually-minded Jew, the mercy of God was no doubt clearly revealed through his various types and shadows. But then it was mercy which seemed to be partial in its manifestation, as it had a more particular reference to him and his nation than it had to the rest of mankind. But now, under the Gospel, the middle wall of partition which separated the Jew from the Gentile is broken down. Every thing in the shape of peculiar privilege is done away, and God appears "rich in mercy unto all that call upon him;" for the good tidings which it brings are designed not merely for the Jew, but "for all people." It is on this account that the salvation of the Gospel is styled "the common salvation," inasmuch as it is bounded by no particular localities, but is to make the circuit of the globe, and is to be offered alike freely, without money and without price, unto all. Like the air which we breathe, and the light which shines around us, it is the common privilege of man. For "the Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth, say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And it is this universality of privilege and adaptation that is ir the Gospel, which lays the foundation for the command in the text; and were it not for this, its distinguishing feature, it could not be the common remedy for the guilt and misery of man. So that, however diversified in point of character and guilt the various tribes

and kindreds of mankind may be, the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, meets their case; for "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," as "God hath set him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood," with this gracious and full assurance that "his blood cleanseth from all sin." Hence the apostles, when they describe "the ministry of reconciliation" with which they were entrusted, represent it thus, "God is in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto himself;" and hence, too, in the commission of the text, it was "all the world" that they were enjoined to contemplate as the field of their exertions; so that wherever they went, whether it was among the dwellers in the far distant East, or among the polished nations of ancient Greece and Rome, they had but one message to communicate, namely, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and wherever, without one solitary exception, this message was believed, it was "the power of God unto salvation." Hence the Jew and the Greek, the Barbarian and the Scythian, the bond and the free, might, in multitudes of instances, be seen partakers of a common hope, and rejoicing in the prospect of a common inheritance in the heavens. And though eighteen centuries have rolled away since then, the Gospel has lost none of its distinguishing and glorious peculiarities. It is still—and whilst the world lasts, it will ever be—the revelation of the mercy of God to the whole family of man. In his sight all are regarded as alike lost, and as alike precious; and to all, whatever be their rank, or condition, or kindred,

or colour, he offers the same remedy and the same heaven.

3. As a rule of duty. Christianity, viewed as a rule of duty, lays down by far the simplest, fullest, and most sublime system of moral action which the world has ever seen; for by placing—as it does—the foundation of all acceptable obedience in the state of the heart towards God, and not merely in outward conduct, it places it on an immoveable and universal basis, applicable alike to all men, and incapable of fluctuation or change. By taking cognizance of the sentiments, desires, and affections of the soul, it vastly extends the range of our views of moral obligation, and leads us to keep the heart, as well as our outward conduct, right with God. With inimitable simplicity, unerring certainty, and a wisdom which no one can call in question, it also assigns to all their appropriate place, and their due measure of regard. Thus, to God, as a matter of course, it gives the first, the supreme, and the constant regard of the heart and life; and tells us that, "whatsoever we do, whether it be eating or drinking," we are to do it to his glory; whilst to the whole family of man it prescribes a rule of action which no one can be at a loss to understand, nor find any difficulty to comply with, if they have only the inclination to regard it—"Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." This may be regarded as its fundamental principle for regulating the general intercourse of man with man. Or should it descend to particulars, with the same degree of precision, and with the same weight of authority, it assigns to all ranks, and condi-

tions, and relations of men, their respective dues--to kings and rulers as well as subjects; to rich as well as poor; to husbands and wives; to parents and children; to masters and servants; to young and old; to all it points out their appropriate duties; so that there is not a situation in which we can be placed, nor a station that we can fill, but it lays down the principles of action by which we are to be guided in it. These principles of action are also of universal application to man, in whatever climate, and under whatever form of civil government he may be placed. And by appealing to the eye of omniscience as constantly searching the heart, and to the irreversible awards of the eternal judgment, it brings us under the influence of motives which no other system can present to us, and gives a sublimity to our actions which nothing else can impart. And in reference to all the statutes of the Lord, may we not with David affirm "they are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward." Such then is the Gospel in its most extended signification, which is appointed as the great moral means for enlightening and saving the world, and which is to be preached for this purpose to every creature under heaven. And having directed your attention to the Gospel itself, let us now consider,

II. The adaptation of this as an instrument for en-

lightening and converting the world. In order that we may illustrate this, we remark,

1. The truths, and mercies, and precepts of the Gospel are just what the world needs. Though much evidence of the being and perfections of God may no doubt be derived from his works, and a considerable measure of knowledge of our duty may also be obtained from the unperverted dictates of conscience, yet owing to the universal and total depravity of the human mind, it is wholly indisposed to improve these ; so that man, when left to himself without Revelation, is universally without all correct knowledge of him, in his being, perfections, and purposes concerning us ; and as the consequence of this, "God," as the Psalmist expresses it, "is not in all his thoughts," so that he has no reference to him in his actions, in his hopes, or in his fears; and thus he lives without him, and dies also far off from him, laden with iniquity, and a vessel fitted for destruction. But when we think of the disclosures of the Gospel—the infinitely important truths which it reveals, and truths, too, which can be learned from no other source—the invaluable mercies which it offers to man as lost—and the simple, spiritual, and perfect rule of duty which it lays down, how admirably adapted is it as an instrument for enlightening and converting the world! As the darkness is past, and the shadows flee away when the sun arises on our world, so when the Gospel sheds its light on the understanding, and transfuses its grace into the heart, the ignorance, impurity, and misery of man are gone—the lost are found—the wanderer is reclaimed—and he who was formerly afar off from God, is now made nigh by the blood of Christ, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. The life,

too, in place of being stained with every crime, is now adorned with "good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Now all this the world universally needs. Its ignorance and errors of God need to be removed and corrected; and its limited views of his character, government, and purposes, need to be expounded. A Saviour is what it requires, or it must perish for ever; and just such a Saviour as the Gospel offers, and just such an offer of him, freely, without money and without price, as it makes of him; and just such a rule of duty as it enjoins, extending to all our relations, and stating with a clearness which cannot be mistaken, and which frees us from all doubt and uncertainty as to what it is that the Lord our God requires of us, and containing nothing but what all the human family, in whatever clime they may dwell, can easily obey. In the truths, therefore, which the Gospel reveals—in the Saviour which it offers—and in the rules of conduct which it prescribes, it exactly meets the ignorant, the sinful, and miserable condition of man wherever we find him.

2. The preaching of the Gospel is admirably adapted to gain the end in view. In order, however, that we may see this, it is necessary that we should briefly refer to the general state of mankind who yet remain to be converted. Now, is it not beyond all controversy certain, that by far the greatest portion of them are so grossly ignorant as to be unable to read a single letter of any language; whilst many more of them are so unsettled in their modes and habits of life, that they must be sought out before the Gospel can reach them? The languages of the earth, too, are so numerous, and in general so difficult of acquisition, that nothing short

of a residence among the people by whom they are spoken, can enable us to acquire them. Besides all this, even admitting that the Bible could be translated into all the languages of the world, and be freely circulated through every heathen country, considering their gross ignorance and awful wickedness, what a length of time would inevitably elapse before they could be expected to understand it? In cases, too, without number, their superstitions, and the influence of the established priesthood, would doubtless effectually prevent it from being read. But when its glad tidings are announced, its truths communicated, and its precepts explained by the living voice of the preacher, the attention of all is called to the subject—a multitude of minds may be acted upon at once—the discourse, too, will be adapted to the state of the people —the illustration will be varied, so as to remove their ignorance and obviate their objections—the glories of the Cross will be so described as to lead them to feel its attractions—and the whole concentrated force of the truth as it is in Jesus, will be brought to bear on the understanding, the conscience, and the heart, till the soul shall yield itself to God. As the preacher, too, will be "a living epistle of Christ," the holy design, and tendency, and practicability, and excellence, of the religion of Jesus, will be presented in living characters before them; and as example is always more efficacious than precept, this will doubtless have a powerful influence in bringing them to the knowledge and obedience of the faith. Converts, too, have to be baptized—Churches have to be formed, and watched over, and the ordinances have to be administered to them, and "faithful men" have to be trained

up for the ministry, "who shall be able to teach others also," and carry on still farther the work of conversion and the edification of the saints. But how can all this be effected without the preaching of the Gospel by the living voice? With it, however, the word of the Lord cannot but have free course, run, and be glorified, till all the ends of the earth shall be brought to see the salvation of God.

3. It has been eminently blessed in the present, and in all preceding ages for the conversion of sinners. Without calling in question the gratifying fact that some, yea, even many, may have been converted through the simple reading of the Scriptures, or works in which their principles are explained and enforced; yet is it not beyond all doubt the preaching of the Gospel which has been most generally and most extensively blessed for the winning of souls to Christ? What was it, for example, that gained the vast multitudes of nominal followers to Christ, but preaching, in connexion with his miracles? What was it that, on the day of Pentecost, gained such an accession to the infant Church, but the simple preaching of Peter and the rest of the Apostles? What was it that led to the formation of all the Churches of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles, but the same means and the same instrumentality? And as it was this means which was principally blessed in Apostolic days for the conversion of souls, so it has continued down to the present day. And just in proportion as it has been faithfully adhered to, and the principles of the Gospel have been exhibited and enforced in all their native clearness and importance, just so do we find that, as a general rule, sinners have been converted,

and believers edified and built up in their most holy faith. And so dependent does the Church seem to be on this, as the means of its growth and stability, that wherever it has been either partially or totally laid aside, religion has never failed wofully to suffer, whilst the impenitent have become more and more careless about their souls' concerns, and daring in their iniquity, till their downward course has ended in everlasting destruction. Indeed, so long as "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," just so long—which will be to the end of the world—will preaching be found to be the principal means, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, which God will bless for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the Church.

4. It is the Divinely appointed means for accomplishing this end. As the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had agreed on the salvation of our world, various means might easily have been thought of and appointed, by which it might have been accomplished. But of all the ways by which it might have been effected, God has been pleased to appoint only one, and that is, the mediation of Christ, by which the guilt of the world has been atoned for, and the preaching of the Gospel, through which the influences of the Holy Spirit are communicated to the souls of men. "Go ye"—said the ascending Saviour to his disciples—"into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." And ever since this Divine command was given, "it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And as God is "the only wise God," who can doubt that this means, as an instrument, is of all others the best adapted for

accomplishing the end in view; and in the proper and universal use of it, who can doubt the success of the Gospel? It is true, indeed, that in all ages "Christ crucified, and the preaching of the Cross," have appeared foolishness unto many; yet, after all the sneers that an ungodly world has cast upon them, they are the only means of its salvation, and possess in them a power before which all opposition, whether it come from wicked men or from hell itself, will ultimately be compelled to flee. And when Christ and him crucified are preached in all lands; and when the holy and peaceful ministers of the Cross can teach all "in their own tongue the wondrous works of God;" then, doubtless, "will be heard voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

By way of improvement, may we not remark,

1. What an invaluable blessing is the preaching of the Gospel. In our preceding remarks we have seen that it is the Divinely appointed means for winning souls, and for building them up in our most holy faith, and which has been in all ages eminently blessed for these important objects. And what objects can be compared with these, so far as our best interests for time and eternity are concerned? And these invaluable blessings, through the riches of Divine goodness, you have long enjoyed, and still continue to enjoy! Amongst the various kindreds of the human race, what an enviable lot is yours when contrasted with that of those on whose darkened minds no ray of the Sun of righteousness has yet shone, and to whose ears none of the glad tidings of the Gospel have ever yet

been conveyed? But how important is the inquiry, in connexion with the possession of the Gospel,—Have you improved or are you improving it? For, let it be ever so valuable in itself, its value to us depends entirely on the use we make of it. What use, then, are we making of it? Is it to bring us to God and to Christ—to establish us in the faith—to carry us on our way increasing in spiritual strength, fruitfulness, and meetness for that holy and happy world, in which the ordinances of the Gospel will be no longer needed? My fervent prayer for you all is, that it may be made "a savour of life unto life, and not of death unto death;" and that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet; and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

2. Let us proceed in the use of this, as the means for the conversion of the world, with the fullest confidence of success. When the Christian talks of converting the world by the preaching of the Gospel, the

enterprise in the eyes of many appears quite as ridiculous as that of David when he went to the conquest of Goliah with nothing but a sling and a stone. The mass of ignorance, of superstition, and impurity is too great, say they, ever to be removed by such means. And were there nothing in, or co-operating with the Gospel, beyond the simple letter of its announcements, the remark would no doubt be true. But little do they who reason in this manner know of the power which accompanies it, and of the efficacy which it has when accompanied by this power, to gain attention and to change the heart. When the prophet Ezekiel was carried by the Spirit into the valley that was full of dry bones, and commanded to prophecy unto them, how foolish must this exercise have appeared unto the wisdom that is only of this world; yet it was in the very act of prophesying that "there was a noise, and a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and that the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above." And when, in obedience to the Divine command, he prophesied again, saying, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live," it was then that he saw "breath come into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army." Now this is precisely an illustration of the efficacy of the preaching of the Gospel; for, though man is employed in communicating it, yet it is the word of God, who has created the human soul with all its powers of thought, of desire, and of action, and has appointed and adapted the Gospel as a means for operating upon it, in order to draw out its powers into proper exercise; and who

has promised to be with his servants always, even to the end of the world, to give efficacy to it as the means for enlightening and saving the soul. Of his faithfulness to his promise, and of his ability also to fulfil it, we have the testimony of the innumerable multitude of the redeemed during eighteen centuries; a testimony, too, that is every day increasing, both in magnitude and strength. When we therefore employ the preaching of the Gospel as the means for enlightening and converting the world, let us do so as if, through the promised blessing of God, we felt confident of success. For as the want of confidence in the success of an enterprise never fails to enfeeble exertion, so it will be lamentably the case in all our efforts to evangelize the world, if we do not firmly believe that "the weapons of our warfare, though not carnal, but spiritual, are yet mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan." And, animated with this conviction, the heralds of the Prince of Peace may fearlessly go forth into the darkest and most frowning regions of the empire of the God of this world; for he, who is with them, is mightier far than all that can be against them; and great is the truth of God, and it must and it will prevail.

3. How strong is the obligation under which we are laid, to use every effort to have the command of the text carried fully into execution. What an affecting reflection, in connexion with this subject, is it, that eighteen centuries have rolled away since the command of the text was given by Christ to his followers, and still by far the greatest portion of the world is yet without the Gospel! And as we think

of the many millions of immortal souls which are still in heathenish darkness and sin, surely each of us should say, it is full time that the apathy of the Church with regard to this matter were entirely shaken off. Let us then, my dear Brethren, never more forget the command of the text, for it is as binding upon us as it was on the Apostles who received it; and whilst duty bids, and gratitude prompts, and mercy and compassion invite us to send the Preachers of the Cross even to earth's remotest bounds, let us endeavour by our pecuniary contributions, our prayers, and direct exertions, to have the means in some measure adequate to the attainment of the end, that many may run to and fro through the earth, and the knowledge of the Lord be increased till all nations shall be blessed in Christ, and all shall call him blessed.

DISCOURSE VIII.

JUDGMENTS WHICH ARE TO BE POURED OUT ON THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD, AS INTRODUCTORY TO THE MILLENNIUM.

HEB. xii. 26, 27. Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word—yet once more—signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

THESE words, in their retrospective allusion, have doubtless a reference to the glorious appearance of the Deity on mount Sinai, when "the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God, and even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of the God of Israel;" and when his voice made every heart to tremble and quake. By the prophet Haggai, we learn that God, in order to encourage the faith and hope of his people amid all their discouragements on their return from the Babylonish captivity, promised to "shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; yea, to shake all nations, and the desire of all nations should come;" and it is doubtless to this promise that the inspired writer of this Epistle refers in the language of the text. Nor can there be a doubt that it was especially fulfilled by the advent and sufferings of the Son of God; for by these there was an end made of all the ceremonial observances and typi-

cal sacrifices for sin; and as He had come, to whom Moses in the law and all the prophets had borne witness, so the whole of the Jewish economy was removed, or laid aside, as an institution that had served its purpose, and was no longer of any use; whilst its place was supplied by the New Testament dispensation, as an institution that is to last till this system of things shall come to an end. But though God may *then* be considered, in an eminent degree, to have shaken the heaven and the earth, yet we apprehend that the shaking referred to is to be regarded more in the light of a *continued* process than as accomplished by a single act or event; and will never cease till every thing that obstructs the universal triumph of the Gospel shall be removed out of the way. And as the language evidently implies the overthrowing of nations and kingdoms through the operation of Divine judgments, it may well assist us in directing our attention to a consideration of the subject which is now to come before us; namely, The judgments which are to be poured out on the kingdoms of this world, as introductory to the Millennium.

In directing your attention to this subject, let us consider: I. The certainty that the Millennium will be preceded by fearful judgments. II. The nature of these judgments. III. The effect which they will produce.

I. The certainty that the Millennium will be preceded by fearful judgments. After having contemplated the beautiful picture of holy and universal happiness which is presented to us in the prophetic descriptions of the Millennium, it is with regret that we turn away to the consideration of scenes of judgment and

wo. But the reference to such scenes in connexion with the introduction of it, are so strong and decided, that it is impossible to overlook them in any thing purporting to be an illustration of this important subject. Thus, by the prophet Micah it is said, that Christ, prior to the nations beating their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, "shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off." And when the prophet Isaiah speaks of the same period, he says, "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." In the 24th chapter, too, where he seems to represent the result of this process of judgment, he gives us the most affecting account of it. "Behold!" says he, "the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is dissolved under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burnt, and few men left." "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many

days shall they be visited." In the 26th and 66th chapters also, he gives us an affecting account of the fearful severity of these judgments, when he represents God as saying—"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold! the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. For behold! the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many." When the prophet Daniel also refers to these days, it is in the same style of affecting description. Thus, says he, "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince who standeth for the children of the people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that time shall the people be delivered." Nor is the language of John in the Revelation less bold and terrific. "And I saw," says he, "three unclean spirits resembling frogs, go forth unto the kings of the earth, and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every

island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." Now, what can be meant by all this terrific imagery of battles, and thunders, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and the fall of cities, and the flight of islands, and the removal of mountains, and the tremendous storm of hail, every stone of which is represented as weighing upwards of one hundred and thirteen pounds, but overwhelming judgments, by which God will sweep every thing before him? And as to the time when all these things shall take place, the believer in the testimony of him who is the Faithful and True witness, can be at no loss to ascertain; for the Apostle John is very particular in fixing it to the time when the seventh angel, who is represented as the last messenger of wrath to this guilty world, shall have poured out his vial into the air; and no sooner are its contents exhausted, than the purity, peace, and glory of the Millennium begin to prevail. The time, too, that is assigned by Daniel for "the trouble such as never was since there was a nation," is that which will immediately transpire before the ingathering of the Jews; an event which is uniformly represented as taking place just at the commencement of the Millennium. The testimony, too, of the prophets Isaiah and Micah, is no less precise and definite as to this point; so that, however discouraging the prospect is, there cannot be a doubt that direful and desolating judgments yet await the world —judgments which all ranks shall feel, and which shall prostrate all human greatness and human oppo-

sition in the dust. For it is the controversy, or the day of vengeance of God Almighty with the inhabitants of the earth, for having transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant. And when it is God who is contending with man, and is making every thing in heaven above and on earth beneath as an instrument of his vengeance, how distressing beyond present description must then be the situation of men! Having thus ascertained the melancholy certainty of these judgments, let us now consider,

II. The nature of them.

1. War, with all its concomitant evils. Of all the calamities with which the world has been afflicted, there is no one that has been such a scourge to man as this; for it may be regarded as containing almost all other ills in itself. Hitherto, also, mankind in general have manifested an awful recklessness in rushing into it; and from the description which John gives us of "the three unclean spirits going forth unto the kings of the earth, and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty," it would seem as if this is to be regarded as the master judgment which God will pour out on the nations. War, many have loved and followed as a profession; and it would seem as if God designed to give them their heart's desire of it, that the spirit of war may thus work itself out. For so long as it exists in the human heart, and is permitted to appear in the councils and transactions of nations, the peace and happiness of the Millennium can never be introduced. Hence the war which John describes as still future, is one of vast extent and the most tremendous conse-

quences; for not only are "the kings of the earth," meaning thereby the kings who have given their power to the beast—that is, their support to Antichrist—but "the kings of the whole world" are to be gathered together to it, that is, by their respective armies. And as to the character of the combatants and the nature of the contest, this description of John may also help us, we apprehend, to form a very correct opinion; for the classification of the prophet leads us to contemplate, on the one hand, all the abettors of Antichristian usurpation, corruption, and political tyranny, and the friends of truth and freedom on the other. And as to the nature of the contest, it seems to be a decided and avowed trial of the strength of both parties; the former, aided by all the power and remaining influence which Satan may be permitted to put forth, will contend not only for the ascendency over their opponents, but for their very existence; whilst the latter, aware of the spirit and designs of the former, and that there can be no true liberty nor peace to the world so long as they are permitted to exercise any influence over it, will be inspired with the most determined resolution to crush their power, and that for ever. And as this will be the last contest between the confederated powers of darkness and light, and of tyranny and liberty, and the last struggle which Satan will be permitted to make in order to sustain his falling kingdom in this world before the introduction of the glory of the latter days, we may rest assured that it will be one of awful fury; so that the nations whose boundaries will form the principal scene of this contest, will realize the melancholy description of the prophet Isaiah—"Therefore hath the curse devoured

the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burnt, and few men left." But amid such wide-spreading desolation as this, who can describe the distress which will be experienced, the sufferings which will be endured, and the crimes which will no doubt be perpetrated? Distress, too, and sufferings which will fall on all ranks and all ages; for, unlike many of the previous manifestations of judgment, by which the poor and industrious have been the principal sufferers, this is to fall with overwhelming fury on the heads of the great. For, says the prophet, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered together in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, not to be visited till after many days." So that *their* day of calamity will then have come—*their* lofty looks will be humbled—*their* haughtiness will be bowed down—and *their* honour will be laid prostrate in the dust. As the beast, too, to which they lent their power will no longer exist, so their influence among the nations will also have passed away; and the influence, political and religious, among all nations, be in the hands of the saints of the Most High.

2. Judgments immediately from the hand of God. In the passages which we have already quoted from several of the sacred writers in order to prove the certainty that tremendous judgments will precede the introduction of the Millennium, it is stated, in addition to war, "That the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with

fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire;" and that a storm of hail, whose stones are to be the weight of a talent, is also to fall upon men. But whether these expressions are to be taken in their literal sense has been doubted. We can see, however, no valid reason for supposing that they may not. For why may not God pour out then on his obstinate enemies, and the obstructers of the universal triumphs of the Redeemer, his judgments of fire and of hail, as well as he did on Sodom and Gomorrah, and on the armies of the five kings who came out to oppose Joshua and the host of the Lord? For a long time, it may be, that he has pled with them by his word and Providence, but they refused to listen to his voice, and to lay down the weapons of their rebellion against him; then, however, the season of mercy will be past, and he will plead with them, as the prophet expresses it, "by fire and by his sword;" so that the contest, so far as they are concerned, will not be merely with their fellow-men, but with the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth. And when they are thus opposed by fire and hail from above, and by the victorious armies of the friends of truth and the liberties of men, how vain will it be for them to cherish a hope of escape! How certain and awful will be their destruction! And how evident will it appear that it is the Lord's controversy, and not man's; and that he has come, as it were, out of his place to shake terribly the earth, that every thing which should not be in it may be removed out of the way, in order that that, which is never to be shaken, may be universally established. These considerations, therefore, as well as others which might easily be stated, have confirmed us in the opinion that, in addi-

tion to the human agency which will be employed in connexion with the judgments to which we have referred, there will be special manifestations of Divine interposition in the destruction of his enemies, and in the protection of his people and his cause.

III. The effect which they will produce.

1. Vast multitudes of the wicked will be cut off by them. It is rare, indeed, that the righteous are men of blood or of war; and if in any case they are so, it arises more from the untoward circumstances in which they are placed, than from the tendency or operation of their principles. The wicked, however, are generally turbulent, and always ready to take the lead in all scenes of civil commotion which may at any time occur. This has been particularly the case in all the contests which have arisen out of opposition to the progress of the Gospel and the best interests of man, and will be particularly so in the last grand struggle for supporting the kingdom of darkness. For as this is to be a struggle not merely for victory, but for existence, Satan will no doubt muster all his forces; so that among the number of the slain will be found a vast multitude of those who have long been the abettors of ignorance, tyranny, oppression, and wickedness, in every form and degree. And as these are the world's, as well as the Church's worst enemies, in getting rid of them what an advantage will it be for the best interests of man? And though it is exceedingly distressing to think of the destruction of the wicked, yet when we think of their obstinacy in opposing the Divine will and the triumphs of the Gospel, and the lamentable consequences which have often sprung from their example, the mind cannot but ac-

quiesce in it as just and necessary, since they would rather rush on the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler, than submit to the offers of his mercy. So far, therefore, as the obstinate enemies of our God and of his Christ are concerned, these judgments seem to be intended to sweep them away as with the besom of destruction, and to leave the world to the holy and peaceful followers of the Lamb.

2. Things which are opposed to the best interests of society will be removed. As the wicked themselves will be cut off, so the various systems and schemes of inequality and injustice, of which they were the supporters, will, as a matter of course, cease to exist. And as the judgments are to fall with peculiar weight on "the host of the high ones, and on the kings of the earth"—the parties who have been in general the great corrupters and oppressors of the world—so corruption and oppression, which have often sunk the poor to the greatest wretchedness, and ground them to the dust, will disappear; and every thing which has militated against the best interests of the whole will be for ever laid aside. Communities will then be left their affairs by the wisest and best of laws; and institutions and customs which have been inimical to the improvement of the mind and the well-being of man, will be rooted out. Among things of this nature, which might easily be enumerated, we may mention that overweaning attachment to wealth and worldly greatness which has hitherto exercised such a baneful influence over the minds of men, has been the great cherisher of pride in the human bosom, and the principal support of that unnatural and unchristian distance which has been so extensively kept up

between man and man. But as the judgments are to fall with fearful severity on the wealthy and the great, they will thus be effectually taught the lesson which they have so long needed to learn, namely, that wealth and worldly greatness are of no real value in the sight of God, and that they can ward off no calamity from man when he has to contend with God. This example, particularly when it is supported by the principles of the Gospel, will doubtless produce a complete revolution in men's minds on this subject, and lead them to see that it is intelligence and piety alone which raise a man in the estimation of heaven; and hence we may naturally expect that their attention will be principally directed to the attainment of this as a treasure which can never be taken from them.

3. Every facility will be afforded for the dissemination of Divine truth. As despotic governments, and all tyrannical combinations to hinder the progress of the Gospel and the general advancement of the world in knowledge and piety will have been completely destroyed, so the heralds of the Gospel will have unrestricted access to the various nations of the earth; and as their zeal will then doubtless keep pace with their opportunities of usefulness, and as the value and necessity of the Gospel in order to secure and promote the welfare of man will then be better understood than ever they have been, so multitudes more than have ever yet gone forth will doubtless go forth to communicate its heavenly truths, and to offer its inestimable blessings to the fallen and prostrate nations. The Church will then come fully up to the help of the Lord, and her wealth will be poured into his

treasury, so that there will be no lack of means for supporting every wise and Divinely appointed plan for scattering abroad "the seed of the kingdom." Kings, too, and the rulers of the nations having now seen the folly and impiety of opposing God, will readily lend their influence to help on the triumphs of the Redeemer, being now fully persuaded that it is righteousness alone which exalteth a nation. And when this is the case, aided, too, as it doubtless will be, by the special blessing of the Lord, how rapid and extensive beyond all precedent will be the progress of Divine truth! This will appear still more certain when we consider,

4. Men of every condition and rank will be brought into a state of mind well adapted for leading them to embrace the Gospel. The Prophet Isaiah, when he refers to the effect to be produced by the judgments to which we have directed your attention, remarks that "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And in that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold which they made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks and into the tops of the ragged rocks; for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Now, in such a state of mind, and whilst under such humiliation, how well disposed are they likely to feel to the offers of mercy which the Gospel brings to them! In the days of their pride and prosperity they may have

lent a scornful ear to the voice of the preacher, or like Felix, have sent him away with an evasive reply to his earnest and tender entreaties; but now, when the hand of God is upon them, and they have learned the vanity of their idols, and all the refuges of lies to which they may have fled for succour, they will gladly sit at his feet, and drink in with the utmost avidity the lessons of heavenly wisdom, and the offers of redeeming love and mercy which he brings from that God whose fury they had by their crimes enkindled against them. How true will it appear to them that the Gospel is "glad tidings of great joy to all people;" and that they who reject it, are sinning against their own souls, and bringing on themselves swift destruction! And how readily, may we not suppose, will all who may be left from the desolations which they have witnessed, comply with the gracious invitation of the Saviour to come to him that they may be saved, and be reconciled through him to their offended God, and be made heirs of everlasting life in the heavens. In place of regarding the Gospel any more with indifference, they will appear a wonder to themselves that they should ever have disregarded or rejected it; and the inquiry will be heard from all quarters—"Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" So that, in place of having occasion to take up the complaint of the prophet—"Who hath believed our report? or to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" the joyful and astonished inquiry of the Church will be—"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?" Hence, among the first fruits of the Millennium, will likely be many of those whom God may have spared from his judgments

to make trophies of his grace, and to sing the praises of Him whose name shall be continued as long as the sun, and who shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, and whose kingdom shall never be removed.

Improvement. 1. This subject shows us, that though the Millennium is the most delightful subject of contemplation to which we can direct our attention, yet we cannot look forward to it without the mingling emotions of grief and delight. To see sinners rejecting the Gospel for themselves, and opposing its progress around them, is always an affecting sight; but to think of whole nations being so completely under the influence of this feeling, and so furious in their opposition to the Gospel as that they must be in a great measure cut off by the judgments of God before it can have free course, run and be glorified, is indeed distressing. But so it is. For if they will not submit to him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, from the convictions of his truth and a sense of duty, "He will speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And when he thus arises out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities, what fearful desolations will he no doubt occasion! And, as in the judgments of Egypt and of the Red Sea, so how vain will they who are the subjects of them find it to be to attempt to contend with God! When we therefore look forward to the distress of nations, and the days of evil which are before us, who can think of them without heartfelt grief on account of the misery which will spring from them, and the impenitence and obstinacy of men, which render

them necessary? But, as in the natural world, when a tempest is past the heavens appear in greater brightness and purity than they did before it commenced, so will it be then in the political and moral world; and when God shall have poured out the last vial of his wrath, it will be to sweep away its remaining evils, and to remove out of the way every thing that hinders the triumphant reign of righteousness and truth over the whole earth; so that when the tempest is past, the world will enter on its long rest of a thousand years from suffering and wo. Though the cloud, therefore, be dark, yet, aided by the light of prophecy, let us look through it, and beyond it, to the holy and peaceful days which will assuredly succeed the pouring out of its contents, and let us keep our minds in perfect peace, being stayed on the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth.

2. Let us prepare for this season of judgment by breaking off our sins by righteousness, and removing every thing out of the way which hinders the progress of the kingdom of Christ. As all the judgments of God are the fruit of sin, and as their design and tendency are to take away sin, so the only way by which they may be averted is to turn from our iniquities, and to walk in the ordinances of the Lord our God. And though the scene of the judgments which we have been considering is likely to be the Catholic countries of Europe, as their object evidently is to destroy the remaining powers and adherents of Antichrist, yet there is probably no country that is in any way connected with them that will entirely escape having a share in them. And as that share is likely to be just in proportion as they will be found contri-

buting to the support of "the man of sin," how important is it that the government and inhabitants of this happy land should keep themselves as free as possible from all connexion with him! For if we would not share in the plagues which are to befal him, we must not bear his superscription, but be found earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and striving for the conversion of the world to Christ. And as many of his adherents are finding their way to this country, and wherever they go are faithful to his cause, and the bigotted opposers of every thing that is connected with the best interests of man, the friends of truth, if they would be faithful to the cause of the Redeemer, and preserve their descendants from being entangled in their destruction, must be indefatigable in their exertions to scatter far and wide throughout the land the seed of that kingdom which is not to be moved; and to hand down to their children, unimpaired in its purity and power, the Gospel of the grace of God. If this is done, though we or they may hear of the clashing of arms, and the falling of nations, and the heaps of the slain on the hostile field, yet, like the lightning which flashes and the thunder that roars at a distance, in this land, which has been sanctified by the prayers and blessed by the institutions of the Pilgrims, it may do us no harm. At any rate, whatsoever others may do, let *us* be faithful unto death, and we shall then obtain a crown of life.

DISCOURSE IX.

AN ABUNDANT AND UNIVERSAL EFFUSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TO PRECEDE AND INTRODUCE IT.

JOEL ii. 28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.

HAVING in our previous discourses endeavoured to describe the nature and certainty of the Millennium, and the instrumentality by which it is to be introduced, we come on the present occasion to direct your attention to one of the most important and sublime subjects which can engage the attention of man; namely, the agency of the Holy Spirit in directing in the use of, and giving efficacy to, the means which have already fallen under our consideration. Now, though we have no reason to believe or expect that in the Millennial effusions of the Spirit there will be any visible signs or tokens of his presence, such as were given on the day of Pentecost at the commencement of the fulfilling of the prophecy of this text, yet as he has immediate access to the mind, and can make it feel, in the effects produced on it, that he is there, and when these effects are universal and simultaneous in vast multitudes adjacent to one another, each will be to each a living manifestation of his agency, whilst all will be wonders to one another of what God hath wrought. And as

in the natural world around us we may daily see innumerable proofs of Divine agency, either in the production or upholding of all things; so the agency of the Spirit will then be as universal in the minds of men, and the evidences of it will be as clearly discoverable in the holy and happy change which will be produced in their character and circumstances. Formality and deadness will be gone, and the profession of piety without the reality will be unknown in the Church. All will be living epistles of Christ; and the world will have become, under the agency of the Spirit, one vast temple of prayer and of praise unto God. The mountains of difficulties, which every where in the present day obstruct the progress of the Gospel, having been removed, and "the dry bones" having been every where prophesied unto, the Spirit will enter into them, and they will every where stand up an exceeding great army. What a glorious manifestation, then, of Divine agency will this work every where exhibit; and how well worthy is it, though still future, of our most serious consideration! In directing your attention to it, we may consider: I. The necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit, in order to the production of religion in the soul. II. The certainty that his influences will be communicated in a degree adequate to the production of the Millennium. III. The manner in which these influences will operate.

I. The necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit, in order to the production of religion in the soul. That genuine piety is not now natural to man, and that the whole world is, and ever has been, since the fall of our first parents, in a state of revolt from God, is so obvious as to render all formal proof of it quite

superfluous. The proofs of them, indeed, are so numerous and clear, and they meet us at every age, and in every avenue and condition of life, that we have only to open our eyes upon them to see that the whole world is guilty before God, and far off from him by reason of its sins. But here the great question naturally presents itself to the inquiring mind—How, or by what means is it, that piety is produced in the soul? Is it within the power of the individual himself, or any system of mere external operation, to produce it? Now, on this subject, the unerring and full testimony of Scripture is quite decided and explicit. Thus, with all the weight of its Divine authority, it declares that "the carnal mind"—that is, the natural mind—"is enmity against God;" and that "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be." That is, that subjection to the law of God, so far as its own ability is concerned, in consequence of this enmity against God, is a moral impossibility. And unless we admit that this is the case, we can see no meaning in the inquiry of the prophet—"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Jer. xiii. 23. It is to the same subject of moral impotency that Job also refers when he asks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." These Scriptural quotations, to which many others might be added of similar import, referring as they do in the most decided terms to this subject, must certainly be admitted to place the opinion altogether out of the question, that religion is produced in the soul by the will, or the unassisted power of man.

But some may, perhaps, be ready to say, that the

use of the means of grace, and the corrective visitations of Providence, are of themselves sufficient to produce it. Laying aside for a moment the consideration of the testimony of Scripture on this point, do we not find that it is contradicted by the universal observation and experience of the past as well as the present age? For a hundred years, at least, Noah was a preacher of righteousness; but though he proclaimed the coming Deluge, and set the people around him the example of preparing for it, and exhorted them to repentance, yet we have no evidence that he was the instrument of converting a single soul from the immense population of the world. Pharaoh and the Egyptians also beheld the mighty signs and wonders of God; yet not one of them seems to have had his heart changed towards the Lord God of Israel. And how soon did the ancient people of God themselves—notwithstanding all the manifestations of Deity which they had witnessed and experienced in their own behalf—forget and forsake the Lord who was their rock, and seek after the gods of the nations around them! And how clearly does their future history also prove, that no course of external discipline, nor degree, nor variety of religious privileges, can change the heart towards God. For to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; yet these were the very persons who despised, and rejected, and crucified the Son of God; and that, too, even after they had heard his inimitable instructions, and seen his many and stupendous miracles. And how often since then has the minister of the Gospel, even after the most faithful exhibitions of the Gospel, been com-

pelled to take up the lamentation of the prophet as his own, and say, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" But were it in the power of any external means to produce a saving change in the state of the soul, how can we account for this universal failure of them, when not accompanied by the agency of the Holy Spirit? But, turning away from these views, let us very briefly consider the doctrine of Scripture on this very important subject; and after having carefully examined every passage which bears upon it, we shall find it impossible to state this doctrine more clearly than in its own language. Thus, "Except a man be born again, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God." In other words, before he can enter the kingdom of God, he must be the subject of a complete change. Nor is its testimony, with regard to the agent who produces this change, less explicit. For its declaration is, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" and hence all who are the subjects of this change are said to be "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" John iii. 5.—i. 13. As the result or consequence of this "new birth," the enmity of the natural mind against God is removed; it is enabled to believe in Jesus, and is said to be "the temple of the Holy Ghost." The various graces, too, of the Christian character, are said to be his fruits; Gal. v. 22, 23. Whilst all the ability of the believer to perform duty, to resist temptation, and to persevere to the end, is ascribed to his being "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." Thus, the commencement, the preservation, and the progress of piety in the soul, are all at-

tributed to the agency of the Spirit of God. Not, however, that this agency operates on the soul without the use of means, but that the means without it will never be effectual for changing us from darkness to light, and turning us from Satan to God. The doctrine of Scripture, then, on this subject, evidently is this; that every believer in Christ is the subject of a complete change in the moral state of his soul, and that this change is produced by the agency of the Holy Spirit upon it. Having thus ascertained that such is the doctrine of Scripture, let us consider,

II. The certainty that his influences will be communicated in a degree adequate to the production of the Millennium. In our preceding discourse we have already seen that the Gospel of the kingdom is to be preached among all nations for a witness unto them; and that thus the way of the Lord is to be made known, and his saving health among all nations. Now, in exact accordance with these arrangements, and to give efficacy to it, God declares in the language of the text that he "will pour out his Spirit on all flesh." Now, that we may fully understand what is meant by the phrase "all flesh," we have only to recollect its application in the account which God gives of the state of the world before the flood, when he says, that "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." That he there means the whole family of man, with the solitary exception of Noah and his family, there cannot be a doubt. When he therefore says that he will pour out his Spirit on all flesh, are we not to understand it in the same extensive meaning, with here and there a solitary exception? Nay, farther; when we are told that "all the earth shall worship

him, and shall sing unto him," and that "all shall be blessed in Christ—all nations shall call him blessed," is it not evident that this is the *only* meaning of which the language is susceptible? For worship him, and sing unto him, in the sense of the passage, they cannot, unless the Holy Spirit renew them in the spirit of their minds, and give them a heart to know him; and blessed in Christ they cannot be, unless the Spirit take of the things of Christ, and show them unto them.

We are well aware that the Apostle Peter, in the explanatory account which he gives of the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel—And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh;" but the only meaning of which this language is susceptible is, that that was the beginning of the fulfilling of this promise; not that that effusion of the Spirit completely exhausted it, or fulfilled to its ultimate extent the purpose of God concerning the redemption of the world, but that a commencement was then made of those effusions of the Spirit which have respect to the whole family of man, and which will increase, in place of ceasing, till "all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." Not only, however, are we thus clearly taught that the *whole* world is to be the scene of the Spirit's operations, but that these operations are to be far more powerful, and continued unrestrained throughout a longer period than the Church has ever yet been favoured with them. Thus God himself, in order to communicate

some idea of their copiousness, says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." On the day of Pentecost, and in some subsequent periods of the primitive Church, and in the early period of the Reformation from Popery, and during many of the happy revivals of religion which have occurred since then, there cannot be a doubt that this gracious promise has been illustriously fulfilled. The period, however, of the continuance of them has been in general short, and such visitations have been by no means the common lot of the Church; but, during the long period of the Millennial age, they are to be her common and universal privilege. And when he will come down, not merely as the rain, nor as the drops of the morning dew, but in such copiousness as to resemble "floods," we can be at no loss to account for the eminent degree of piety which is represented as then every where prevailing. Yes; when the Spirit is thus poured out from on high, then "shall the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses."

III. The manner in which they will operate. They will operate,

1. In awakening in the minds of all the most serious concern for salvation. In surveying the history of the state of the Church, both in ancient times and in the present day, it is surprising and deeply affecting to see what multitudes have sat under the sound of the Gospel without ever manifesting any serious concern about obtaining an interest in its blessings; whilst many others have assumed the attitude of defi-

ance, and have said, "Who is the Almighty that we should serve him; and what profit should we have if we pray unto him; and depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." The convictions of the Spirit have been wanting; hence they have heedlessly, and, in many instances, fearlessly pursued their downward course, unawed by the terrors of the law, and unmelted by the entreaties of the Gospel. But such will no longer be the case when the Spirit is poured out on "all flesh," for then "he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" and whenever this is the case, the first and earnest inquiry of all will be, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" The sanctuary will no longer be forsaken or neglected; the instructions, entreaties, and exhortations of the preacher will no more be disregarded, or treated as an idle tale that has been often told; the delusive plea, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee," will no more be heard; their situation as sinners will be felt by all; and the scriptural declaration that "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," will be acknowledged and acted upon by all. Hence, through all the villages, and towns, and cities throughout the world, it will be an universal awakening, and striving to enter into the kingdom of God. Every one will feel himself to be lost, and as standing on the brink of destruction, and as not having a moment to lose without fleeing to the Saviour. And what an interesting period will it be, when all the ends of the earth shall be looking to him for salvation, and when the convictions and concern will be such as shall not die away, like

many of the excitements of the present day, but shall last till the soul has found peace with God, through an interest in the peace-speaking blood of Christ.

2. In qualifying all the members of the Church for the extraordinary calls which will then be made on them for exertion. As the calls on the Church for exertion will then be such as she has never witnessed before, so she will be eminently qualified for attending to them; for the Spirit will be poured out in the most abundant measure upon her. And as the ministers of the Gospel will have to be abundant in labours, and instant in season and out of season, in order that they may meet the numerous cases of spiritual distress and inquiry which may come before them, so we may naturally expect that they will share largely in his gifts and graces. Their knowledge of Divine truth may be much greater than it is generally now; and their manner of illustrating, enforcing, and applying it to the diversified situation of all who may come before them, may be much more appropriate. Their zeal and devotedness will be in exact proportion with the greatness of the work which they have to accomplish; whilst their whole character and deportment will be in delightful harmony with the principles and spirit of the Gospel. Nor will the members of the Church be backward in taking their appropriate share in any good work. As their own souls will have shared liberally in the general "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," so they will eminently shine as lights, holding forth the word of life in their walk and conversation; and zealously coming up with their exertions, their wealth, and their influence, to the help of the Lord. None then will look with carelessness on

those who are out of the way, and perishing in their sins, nor feel indifferent about the advancement of the Redeemer's glory. The worth of the soul will be duly appreciated; its exposure to eternal misery will be duly regarded; the power of the grace, and the extent of the merits of the Saviour, will be well understood; and the constraining power of his love will be felt by all. No good, therefore, will be left unattended to; and as there will be no disunion nor lukewarmness, so they will all think the same thing, and with heart and hand help forward the great work of converting the world to Christ. This will then be felt to be the only thing worth living for; and a man will rise in esteem and influence just as he rises in the scale of spiritual excellence and usefulness; and the ambition of all will be, to bring the most honour and glory to the riches of Divine grace, reigning through Christ Jesus to this fallen and miserable world.

3. In blessing, in the most abundant degree, the means of grace to the conversion of souls. As the awakening will be universal, and the zeal and exertions of the Church will be equal to the calls which may be made upon them, so the communications of the Spirit, as to fulness and variety, will be adapted to both. The doubts and fears, therefore, of the awakened and inquiring will be soon removed, and the soul will find a lasting peace and joy in believing. And among the vast multitude of the ministers of the Gospel who may then exist and labour in the Church, there will be none who will be able to take up the lamentation of the prophet, and say, "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." Their instructions and counsels, exhortations

and warnings, will be sealed on the hearts of their hearers; and their crowns of rejoicing in the day of the Lord will be more numerous than we can well conceive. The Scriptural description of the Gospel, that it is "the power of God unto salvation," will then be fully realized and displayed, in its reducing to the obedience of the faith those who may have long been obstinate and careless, and in stirring up those who may have long been hesitating, without delay to lay hold on eternal life as it is offered in the Gospel. And when it is thus aided by the demonstration of the Spirit, it will run and be glorified; and the prophetical description of nations being born in a day will be amply verified. Yea, so rapid will be the progress, and so powerful the influence of the Gospel at the commencement and during the Millennium, that the delightful scenes of Pentecost will be nothing when compared with those which will then exist. It will be *universally* the day of the Redeemer's power; and every knee will be bowing to him, and every tongue will be confessing him, to the glory of the Father. And when this is the case from east to west, and from north to south, how abundantly will the means of grace be blessed to the conversion of souls!

4. In removing all error from the Church. In every past age of the Church, error, in a great variety of forms, has defaced her beauty, and ruined the souls of men. But as error in every shape and degree has sprung from Satan, and the want of the agency of the Spirit of God on the souls of men, when Satan is universally cast out, and chained for a thousand years in his dreary abode of darkness and wo, and the Spirit of God is universally poured out, and the Gospel is diffused over the whole world, the human mind will be

universally freed from the errors which have so long led it astray, and will be walking in the truth, even as it is in Christ. The various false systems of philosophy, and the erroneous standards of action which have prevailed both in ancient and modern times, will all be destroyed; and the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, be allowed to form the characters and to regulate the conduct of men. And as all will be, in an eminent degree, under the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, so they will be all of one mind, and will all speak the same thing; so that, as there is but one shepherd, there will also be but one sheepfold. The divisions of Zion will then be effectually healed, and contentions between brethren be unknown; for "one heart" will be given unto them, and they will all walk in one way. The reign of error will have come to an end; and truth, pure as it came from heaven, will rule in the heart, and form it for that world where there is no deception, but where every thing is purity and truth.

5. In removing every thing that is improper from the temper and conduct of her members. The imperfections of the believer have been deeply lamented in every age, and have contributed greatly to the hindering of the progress of the kingdom of Christ. But as they have all originated in the sinful state of the soul, and in the very imperfect degree of sanctification which most have hitherto attained, when the Spirit of God shall be poured out as floods on the dry ground, we may very naturally expect that these imperfections will be greatly, if not completely, removed, and a far greater degree of the image of God, and the mind that was in Christ Jesus, be reached than has hitherto been. For as Satan will never be permitted to dis-

turb the soul by his temptations, nor to lead it astray from the path of duty, it will be left free from all opposition to the moulding influence of the Gospel and the Spirit of God. And when this is the case, how soon will the soul become holiness to the Lord, and every thing disappear from it which can offend! Christians will then no longer be stumbling-blocks in one another's way, but all will edify one another in love; and, like Zacharias and Elizabeth of old, be "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

6. In greatly elevating the standard of Christian principle and practice. In examining with any degree of accuracy into the state of the Church, both in the present and former days, do we not perceive the most lamentable evidences that in these respects she has come far short of the glory of God? Ostensibly she has said that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain the only rule of faith and practice; but, in cases without number, she has been a hearer of the word, but not a doer of it. In the happy days, however, when the prophecy of the text shall have been fulfilled, the very reverse of all this will be the case. For, along with the extended knowledge of the Divine requirements, conscience will be proportionably faithful, and the heart will be fully disposed to yield an entire, as well as a willing obedience, to all that the Lord our God hath spoken. The example, too, of the Saviour will be laid down as an unerring guide, and will be faithfully adhered to in all its imitable perfections. The heart then will not rest satisfied with low attainments in grace, nor in exertions for the glory of the Lord. All will earnestly desire the best gifts, and

will cultivate them to the highest possible degree. And zeal for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, like fire in our bones, will give life and vigour to every member of the Church. The consecration of the soul, and of wealth and influence to the service of Christ, will be entire and permanent. The demon of mammon will be cast out of the heart, and the days be for ever past when any will attempt to serve God and the world at the same time. And as our heavenly Father is perfect, so will all be aiming to be so in the highest degree of which their natures are susceptible. And when we reflect that it is the whole family of man that is to attain this spiritual excellence, and to manifest this holy devotedness, what an amazing advancement in knowledge and piety will mankind then have made, above every thing of the kind that we see in the present day. How holy and spiritually minded will they all be, and what delight will they experience in the service of Christ; and with what joy will they look forward to eternity and heaven as the place where they are all soon to meet, for ever to taste the joys which cannot be expressed, and to mingle in the scenes which no earthly language can describe!

By way of improvement of this important subject, we remark,

1. We here learn that we have the *firmest* foundation on which our faith and hope, with regard to the Millennium, may rest. In surveying the present state of the Church and the world, we readily admit that the difficulties in the way of it are exceedingly great. But when we bear in mind that the agency to be employed in effecting it is the same as that which moved on the face of the waters at first—when all was chaos

—and reduced every thing to the beautiful order in which we now behold it, and which garnished the heavens above us, how can we doubt the practicability of it? For the agent employed to effect it is Divine; and whenever and wherever he is pleased to work, who shall be able to resist and overcome him? When the Gospel, therefore, shall have been preached in all lands, and when the judgments, to which we lately directed your attention, shall have laid Antichrist and all his supporters prostrate in the dust, and the way of the Lord shall have been thus prepared, whatever more remains to be done for the conversion of the world to Christ, and the elevation of piety in the Church, we may rest assured that the Spirit will easily perform, when he is poured out on all flesh as floods on the dry ground. Had the same influence, for example, which he communicated to the three thousand souls, who were added to the Church on the day of Pentecost, been extended to the whole multitude which was then in Jerusalem, who can doubt that they should all have become the followers of the Lamb? And if this same influence is extended to the whole world—and what can hinder it, as the Spirit is omnipotent, and every where present—is not the world just as easily, and as likely to be converted, as those three thousand souls were at Jerusalem? If the difficulties, therefore, are great, let us ever remember that the means and the agency to remove them are also great. Yea, that the work is the LORD'S, and that he has *promised* to do it. And as there is nothing too hard for Him, we cannot entertain a doubt that it *will be done*, and that ALL nations shall be blessed in Christ; and that His praise shall be sung by every tongue, and in every land under heaven.

2. In all our plans for the diffusion of religion, let us ever remember, that without the agency of the Holy Spirit it can never be produced in the soul. This is a most important remark for all to keep in mind in their plans and prayers for the extension of Christ's kingdom. For though, so far as our exertions are concerned, it is our duty to be as zealous and active as if success depended entirely upon them, yet we must never forget that "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God who giveth the *increase*." Yes, religion in the soul is of Divine origin, and the agency which produces and sustains it, is that which the Holy Spirit puts forth through the channel of the means of grace. In the diligent use of these, therefore, let us look beyond them to this; and never let us attempt to help forward the Millennial glory without our faith and hope resting upon it. To send the Gospel, or to preach it, to those who are sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death, is by far the most important blessing that we can confer on them; yet, after they have possessed it, it will be but a dead letter if the spirit of life in Christ Jesus does not accompany it. Let us depend, therefore, on *this;* and when we see sinners converted, or saints edified and built up in their most holy faith, let us hail it as an evidence of his presence, and ascribe to him all the glory.

3. Let all, therefore, seek after a more copious measure of it for themselves, and earnestly pray for the fulfilment of the promises of God concerning it in reference to others. What a delightful thought is it, that a time is coming when the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, and as floods on the dry ground for copiousness, and that he will remove out of the Church

every thing that is wrong and defective; and that, under his influence, the world will be filled with spiritual worshippers of the only living and true God. And what effect should this delightful prospect have upon *us*? Ought it not to be, earnestly to seek a larger measure of his influence for ourselves than we at present possess, that we may approach—though it may be at a humble distance—the knowledge, the holiness, and the happiness of those who may be favoured to live in the Millennial age? And what blessing so valuable can we ask, either for our children, or others around us, or others that are far off, as the fulfilment of the promise of the text. Seeing, then, that God has in his infinite condescension said, that "for all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel," and that he has invited us "to prove him, and to see whether he will not open to us the windows of heaven, and pour us out a blessing till there shall not be room enough to contain"—let us come with believing hearts and prove him, and ask that we may receive, and seek that we may find. And whatever blessing you fail to ask, O forget not the Holy Spirit; for in possessing him, you have every thing that you can need and all that you can desire, till you reach that world where you will be for ever established in holiness, and will shine resplendent in the image of the Saviour, and be for ever beyond the reach of sin and wo.

DISCOURSE X.

ON THE DOWNFALL OF ANTICHRIST.

REV. xviii. 21. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

ALL who are acquainted with the history of the Church and the state of the world, know that the greatest obstructions to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ have originated in the usurpations and corruptions of Antichrist on the one hand, and Jewish infidelity on the other. Hence, their destruction must form so important an era, and be productive of so many advantageous results to the Church and the world, that they are well worthy of a distinct consideration in a series of discourses illustrative of the Millennium; and it is to the former of these we solicit your attention on the present occasion.

In the primitive ages of the Gospel, and even during the days of the Apostles, we learn that there were many Antichrists; and, in attending to the account which John has given us of them, their leading error seems to have been connected with the Trinity, and a denial that Jesus was the long-promised Messiah. The great Antichrist, however, "the wicked one—the son of perdition, whose coming" Paul had described

"as after the workings of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," had not then begun to manifest the full-grown features of his character. If the system, indeed, existed at all, it was but in its latent beginnings; and ages were to pass away before it could appear in all its hideous deformity of error and cruelty. Awful, however, though its departures were from the truth, and terrible though it was as a scourge of the Church and of mankind, yet the day actually came when it was fully manifested to the world. And when it did appear, it resembled a monster having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of Blasphemy. In order, also, to illustrate still farther the characters of this system, it is sometimes called Sodom, and Egypt, and Babylon; appellations which are doubtless intended to suggest its unnatural crimes and cruelties, and the dreadful calamities which it has brought on the genuine people of God. But here, as might very naturally be expected, a controversy has arisen as to who or what Antichrist is; Papists endeavouring to find him in some of the Pagan persecutors, or heretics as they are pleased to denominate some of the brightest ornaments of the Church; and Protestants being no less confident that he is to be regarded either as the head, or the system itself, of the Romish Church. The descriptions, however, which are given of his character and proceedings in the Scriptures, agree so exactly with the tenets and history of the Church of Rome, that no mind, which is not so opposed to the truth as that it cannot see it when it is presented before it, can be at any loss to come to a con-

clusion on the subject. When we, therefore, speak of Antichrist, we are to be understood as referring to the system of the Romish Church, of which the Pope is the head; and when we speak of the downfall of Antichrist, we mean the utter subversion of this system wherever it has been established or countenanced. In directing your attention to this subject, we shall, I. Describe the character of Antichrist. II. The certainty of his destruction. III. The means and manner by which it will be effected.

I. Describe the character of Antichrist. As illustrative of this, we remark that it may be viewed,

1. As a system of awful usurpation in reference to God. Of God, it is said that he is a jealous God, and his glory he will not give unto another. As the sovereign of the universe, it belongs to him to give laws to his creatures, and to receive the homage, love, and obedience of their whole hearts; but of "the man of Sin" —the great Antichrist—it is said that "he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." That is, in all matters of a religious nature he arrogates to himself the honours, influence, and works which belong only to God. And that we may see how exactly this is descriptive of the Pope and the system of which he is the head, we have only to consider the blasphemous nature of some of his assumptions. Thus, among the titles which he claims, is that of being a "God on earth, and the Lord God the Pope." And in order to show that he does not regard these merely as empty titles without a meaning, he declares that "he and his are not bound to be subject and obedient to the commands of God—that all laws are in the coffer of the Pope's breast, and full power over all laws—

that if the Pope be so negligent of his own salvation, and so negligent and remiss in office that he should draw innumerable multitudes to hell with him to be there ever tormented, yet may no mortal man reprove him of any fault in so doing—that the Pope has power to commute and dissolve vows made to God; and then if any man defer to pay his vow according to God's command, he is not held guilty—that the Pope has not his authority from the Scriptures, but the Scriptures from the Pope." The sum, indeed, of all the Canonical law of the Romish Church is, "that the Pope is a God on the earth, superior to all celestial, terrestrial, spiritual, and secular persons; that all things are his, and none may say unto him—'What doest thou?'" In strict accordance, also, with this blasphemy, and in times and ways without number, and many of them too gross to be here particularly detailed, has he set aside the laws of God, and by his plenary indulgences allowed the fullest scope to the depravity of the heart in his followers. His assumption, too, of Divine powers is seen not only in his altering and disannulling the commands of God, but in his adding to them many things that are entirely of human invention, and placing them on a level with such things as God has revealed. The honour, too, which he claims from his subjects, is exactly similar to that which God claims from his creatures. Indeed, the whole system, viewed in its aspect towards God, is not merely an assumption of equality with him, but of superiority to him. And did we not know, beyond all doubt, that it has prevailed, and still prevails over a great part of the civilized world, it is so awfully blasphemous, that we should not be able to believe it. And strong though

the language be which the Scriptures use in order to describe his character, it does not go beyond the reality; for, as "the Man of Sin, and the Son of Perdition, and the Wicked One," his great object seems to be to turn the mind entirely from God, and to lead it to sin not only openly but fearlessly; and willingly to rush to everlasting perdition.

2. As a system of awful error, by which the distinguishing peculiarities of the Gospel are either denied or set aside. In the Sacred Scriptures we are told that Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life; and that there is no mediator between God and man, but he;" but in the Popish system we find that there are many to whom its deluded followers are enjoined to pray: as Mary the mother of our Lord, and a vast number of their canonized saints and angels, to all of whom they are instructed to address their supplications as intercessors between them and God. Again, in the Sacred Scriptures we are told that "Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many," and that "by ONE offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Hence, in virtue of this sacrifice for sin, his ambassadors are to preach forgiveness to the world, and to hold him forth as the only propitiation through faith in his blood; but in the ceremony of the sacrifice of the mass, the Pope and his followers pretend still to offer up the real body and blood of Christ as a sacrifice for sin! By their doctrine also of human merit, and the virtue of their penances, they effectually set aside the merit of the Saviour, and make salvation to be entirely of works! By pretending also to forgive sins, they arrogate to themselves the power of distributing the mercy of God to the souls of men. And

by their invention of Purgatory, and the supposed power of the priesthood to pray souls out of it, they effectually deny the accountability of man, and set aside all the declarations of Scripture concerning the nature and consequences of the Judgment. By declaring also, as they do, that "if the Pope should err by commanding vice and prohibiting virtue, the Church was bound to believe vice to be good and virtue to be evil," they effectually do away the eternal distinction between virtue and vice, which exists in the nature of God, and thus virtually set aside the whole system of Revelation. Thus, in the hands of such men the Gospel is nothing, and the Saviour is nothing but what they are pleased to make them; and sin and holiness may change their respective properties—either when applied to intentional errors, or those which spring from ignorance. How exactly, then, do his character and works correspond with his name, "the man of sin and Antichrist?" His element, indeed, is sin; the tendency of the whole system is sin in all its forms; and his doctrines strip the Gospel of all its glory, and Christ of all his honour as the Saviour of the world. How well, then, may he be described as "The Wicked One —the great Antichrist, whose coming is after the workings of Satan?"

3. As a system of opposition to the diffusion of the word of God. The Sacred Scriptures are denominated the oracles of God, inasmuch as they contain a revelation of his mind and will to man. And as they are to be considered as God's voice to man, so in order that all may hear it, it is necessary that it should be circulated throughout the whole world. But nothing forms a more prominent feature in the proceed-

ings of "the man of sin," than his opposition to the general diffusion of the word of God. His avowed doctrine, indeed, is, that it should never be in the hands of the laity; and throughout a long period of his existence he acted faithfully upon it, and kept the mind of his adherents in a state of the grossest ignorance of all that the Lord our God has spoken to us. And this is precisely the state of the case still in all those countries where his influence reigns uncontrolled, or unchecked by that of Protestants. As a proof that this is no libel upon him, and as illustrative of his true spirit towards the word of God, we appeal to the fact that, since Bible Societies came into operation, he has repeatedly thundered out his anathemas against all attempts to circulate them amongst his adherents, and prohibited them, under pain of the most dreadful penalties, from receiving them. Hence, under the operation of these anathemas, many copies of the Scriptures, which had been distributed in Catholic countries, have been seized by the priests, and torn to pieces or committed to the flames.

But here it may possibly be objected, that the Pope has now allowed the use of the Scriptures to the laity, and that therefore this feature of his character is no longer correct. This, however, is very far from being the state of the case; for in countries which are entirely under his sway they are still a prohibited book, except to the priesthood. Besides all this, the Scriptures which are circulated are not the pure unadulterated word of God, allowed to speak for itself, but a mistranslation of it, designed to propagate the leading features of the system, and accompanied by notes and explanations, in which it is maintained and defended in all its deformity. The man of sin knows full well

that if he were to circulate the word of God pure as it came from his own hands, and leave it to speak for itself, the eyes of his adherents would soon be opened to discover and detest his true character, and that there would be an end to his influence over the minds of men. His plan, therefore, is, and ever has been, and ever will be—as far as he can act out the genuine spirit of his system—to keep them ignorant of what the will of the Lord is; hence he will never allow them to have the word of God in their hands if he can keep it out of them. Rather, indeed, will he allow them to perish than enable them to search the Scriptures, which contain the words of everlasting life, and conduct the soul to the Saviour.

4. As a system of unprecedented cruelty and persecution. The express injunctions and tendency of the Gospel are directly opposed to every thing in the shape of cruelty and persecution; but of the history of Antichrist, it may well be said that it is written in blood. In every country, indeed, in which he has held the sovereign sway, he has—as John describes him—"caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name." Or should any have fortitude enough to call in question his supremacy, and oppose his usurpations, he has never failed "to cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be put to death." Hence, when John saw him in his prophetical visions, it was under the resemblance of "a woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the

martyrs of Jesus." And so accurate is this description of him, that there is no country in which he has been established by the civil power, which he has not—at one period or another—drenched with the blood of the saints. The rights of conscience he has never in such circumstances respected. Like "a God on earth," above all laws, human and Divine, he has announced his proscriptions; and kings with their subjects have been consigned to destruction, and unheard-of cruelties been perpetrated upon them, whenever they had the heroism to think and act on the subject of religion for themselves. By the single device, too, of the Inquisition, he has destroyed more lives than can well be credited. And still his nature is unchanged. Like a beast of prey, he still thirsts for the blood of the saints; and though his political power is greatly diminished, yet he still possesses enough to render him formidable wherever his influence prevails; and before his destruction, this power is likely to be exerted to the utmost, so that many may yet be the sufferers from this monster of cruelty and corruption. But, blessed be God, the days of his power are coming to an end—the sun of his reign is setting—and the period may not be far distant, when the voices of a redeemed world shall be heard, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen to rise no more."

Let us consider,

II. The certainty of his destruction. The destruction of Antichrist cannot but appear an object so desirable that the mind of every well-wisher of man must anxiously look for the evidence of it, on which our faith and hope may rest. Now, concerning this it may be remarked, that the evidence of his destruction is just as full

and definite as that which we have in connexion with his rise and influence. For in the very passage in which Paul gives us so graphic a description of his rise and character, he tells us that "the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming;" language which not only announces the certainty of his destruction, but the agent by whom it is to be effected, and the manner in which it is to be done. The whole, too, of the chapter from which the text is selected, contains nothing but an affecting description of his ruin. And in order the more effectually to impress our mind with the certainty of it, John represents a mighty angel as coming down from heaven, and whose glory lightened the earth, in order that he might announce it. And from the description that is given of him, we are naturally led to suppose that this was Jesus himself, the angel of the covenant, and the faithful and true witness, to whom the future, as well as the past and the present, is perfectly known. As he could not, therefore, be mistaken, so neither could he lead us into error concerning it; for the perfection of his nature raises him to an infinite distance above the possibility of this. His testimony, therefore, must be true. But what is the amount of this testimony? Why, that certain, irrecoverable, and sudden destruction awaits the Papal power and all his adherents. Like ancient Babylon in her pride and glory, Antichrist is destined to experience a desolating destruction. His pride, and riches, and luxury are to be turned into shame, and want, and misery. His joy is to give place to mourning, and his pleasure to torment. In one day the plagues of death, and mourning, and

famine, are to come upon him; and all ranks of people under his dominion are to be reduced to the utmost poverty and distress; whilst he himself is to be visited with the heaviest vengeance from God, for all the cruelty and oppression which he has exercised upon his servants and people. The tokens, too, of his torments are to be visible and affecting, as the thick and fiery smoke which ascends from a city on flames. His friends, too, who had formerly supported him, and gained their wealth from him, when they see his sudden and utter destruction, are represented as being greatly astonished, and as lifting up their lamentations over him; and seeing that he can help them no more, as fleeing as far as possible out of the way of his judgments, and leaving him to sink, unpitied and forsaken, under his fearful calamities. Such is the amount of the testimony of Jesus concerning the downfall of Antichrist. And who that really believes in him can doubt that it will be literally fulfilled? For as he himself is to be the great agent in accomplishing this destruction, and as all power in heaven and on earth is given to him, when he arises out of his place, and manifests this power, how feeble and useless will be all the resistance which Antichrist can make before him. His hand is mighty to *destroy* as well as mighty to save; and it has only to be lifted up, and its vengeance descend, and then—suddenly as a millstone that is cast into the sea sinks and disappears—so shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. Let us now consider,

III. The means and manner by which it will be effected.

1. By the general diffusion of the pure doctrines of

the Gospel. As the system of Antichrist is a system of ignorance and superstition, so it can be effectually rooted out only by the principles of the Gospel. It is not enough that its *present* adherents be destroyed; the system itself must be rooted out of the heart, and the understanding be elevated above its errors; and this can be done only by the communication of the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the soul. And so far as the past history of the Church can assist us in forming an opinion of this part of it, which is still future, there cannot be a doubt that this will be a most effectual means of hastening the destruction of all Antichristian error and usurpation. For by it the minds of men will be enlightened to see the truth, and to perceive the hideous deformity, and the soul-ruining tendency of the errors to which we have already alluded. And it seems to be this which is principally intended, when it is said that "the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth." As in the beginning of the glorious Reformation, when Luther and his fellow-labourers lifted up their voice and preached the everlasting Gospel, and showed to the world the deformity of the Beast, and many of his followers were led to abandon him and his cause, so the time will again come when all this will be done, and even with greater effect; for the defection from him will then be more general and complete. And when we cast our eyes on the operations of the Christian Church in the present day, and see the flood of light which, by the general diffusion of the Scriptures, and numerous works calculated to enforce their pure, spiritual, and heavenly principles, we cannot but perceive that the means are already in

operation, by which the remaining influence of the man of Sin will be effectually destroyed. For mankind will become too wise, and too well acquainted with the nature of the Gospel, to be deceived as they have been by "the mystery of iniquity." And though the powers of darkness will no doubt exert their utmost influence to prevent its inroads, yet it will be all in vain. For the time is rapidly passing away, during which the greatest portion of mankind have taken truth upon trust. Yes; the spirit of the age is decidedly that of inquiring into the reason of things; and whenever this spirit shall have spread extensively over Catholic countries, and the Scriptures shall have been circulated in them, and the pure doctrines of the Gospel shall be preached in them, it does not admit of a doubt that many will be found who will have principle enough to enable them to confess Christ, and abandon the man of Sin to the ruin which they will clearly see to be impending over him; and thus contribute to weaken his influence over the minds of others.

2. By the destruction of his political influence through the defection of states and countries formerly attached to his sway. In reading over the history of the rise, progress, and completion of Antichrist, nothing is more evident than that he was greatly indebted to the assistance which he derived from the civil powers or governments into which the old Roman empire was broken after its fall. Hence the ten horns which John, in vision, saw, as jutting out or protruding from the head of the mystical Babylon, are afterwards interpreted as meaning "ten kings, who were possessed of one mind, and gave their power and strength unto the Beast." It is a remarkable circumstance,

however, that these ten kings—that is, the states or kingdoms which are under their sway—are at last represented as "hating the Beast, as making him desolate and naked, and eating his flesh, and burning him with fire," Rev. xvii. 16. And in looking at the present state of the nations of Europe, the accurate observer cannot fail to discover a remarkable fulfilment of a great part of this prophecy. For already have some of the most powerful of the nations, which in former times were under his sway, ceased to give their power and strength to him; and the tidings have but just well reached us of Portugal, that was so long devoted to his cause, having cast off his yoke, and bid defiance to his anathemas and power. Spain, too, is rapidly following her example; and renovated by the Gospel and the grace of the Saviour, may yet wipe away the deep stains of blood and cruelty which appear in her history, and come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and contribute to the carrying on of the Church to her Millennial peace and glory. Other nations that are still closely in league with him, may also soon become tired of his corruptions and tyranny; and clearly foreseeing the storm of wrath which is coming upon him, may, in order to save themselves, forsake him, and join in the universal assault which will be made upon him and his interests. And when this is the case, how speedy, as well as terrible, may his destruction come upon him. For when he is assaulted, as well as forsaken, by the very nations which gave him his civil existence and power, he will be thrown entirely on his own resources, which will be found just as weak as a broken reed to him

that leans upon it, before the overwhelming force which will be against him.

3. By terrible judgments from God. In addition to all the calamities of war, which may be inflicted through human agency, we seem to have the strongest evidence for believing that God himself will be an agent in accomplishing his destruction. Thus, when he is spoken of as Babylon under the figure of a woman, we are told that "her sins have reached unto heaven—that God hath remembered her iniquities—that the plagues of death, and mourning, and famine, shall come upon her in one day, and that she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her; and that he will give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. In our discourse on the judgments which are to be poured out on the nations of the earth as introductory to the Millennium, we had occasion, as you may recollect, to refer to this subject. And on a farther consideration of it since then, we are persuaded that God will not only pour out the most terrible judgments from his own hands upon Antichrist and all his obstinate adherents; but that Rome, which has been for so long a period his seat, is to be laid in ashes, and to remain a perpetual ruin. Hence the smoke of her burning, like pillars stretching far into the heavens above her, is represented as ascending immediately after it had been stated "that she shall be utterly burnt with fire." And so terrible is the conflagration that the kings of the earth, who formerly gave their power unto her, when they saw the smoke of her burning, are represented as "standing afar off for the fear of her torments;" that is, lest it should come nigh unto them—and,

full of confusion and astonishment, as "saying, Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come." The merchants, also, who were made rich by her, are also introduced as "standing afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas,! alas! that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, for in one hour so great riches is come to nought," The ship-masters, and all the traders by sea, are also represented as standing afar off, and weeping and wailing, "because in one hour she is made desolate." The whole of this phraseology leads us to anticipate that Rome herself—yes, proud, imperial Rome—is to be laid in ashes, along with immense multitudes of the adherents of the Beast. And so sudden is her destruction to come upon her, that it is represented as taking place in "an hour;" and so complete is to be her overthrow, that, in the language of the text, "she shall be found no more at all." Thus will Antichrist and his remaining adherents, his system and his seat, from which he has so long thundered his anathemas, and sent forth his delusions, perish together; and then, when this system of cruelty and corruption is destroyed, the Church and the world will have rest; and heaven, as well as earth, will join in the ascription of "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand;" and then shall Christ, with-

out one opposing foe, reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

In drawing this subject to a close, we remark that it should lead us,

1. Earnestly to seek the conversion of the followers of Antichrist. Though it is not possible for us to abhor and detest the *system* of Antichrist too much—that is, beyond what it deserves—yet to its deluded followers we should ever be ready to extend the pity of the Gospel; and by every means within our power—in the use of instruction, kindness, and prayer—endeavour to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, and a forsaking of their sins. Whilst a great deal is being done, through the exertions of the Church, for the conversion of heathen and Mohammedan nations, does not this subject suggest an important inquiry, whether we are doing what we should, or might do, for the conversion of those who are still ensnared in the delusions of "the man of Sin?" Are not their souls just as precious as either the souls of Pagans or Mohammedans? Are they not in as imminent danger of being lost as theirs? And, were proper and persevering efforts made for their conversion, is it not likely that in many cases they would be crowned with a glorious measure of success? Owing, however, to the declining spirit of the Protestant churches, we are disposed to think that they have been too long and too much neglected; whilst in some instances evil, in place of good, has been rendered to them for evil; a circumstance which has only tended to deepen their prejudices, and to call forth into active exercise the spirit of their system. But if we would win their souls from the error of their ways, we must adopt a

very different course—a course that will lead them clearly to perceive that it is their system, and not *them*, that we abhor; and that whilst we wage perpetual hostility against it, our heart yearns over them in unfeigned compassion; and that it is their soul's good, and not their ruin, that we seek. And whenever we thus manifest the spirit of the Gospel, in connexion with zealous and well-directed efforts for their good, we have no doubt that many of them will be led to see its superiority over their own, and to come and be followers of us as we are of Christ. And what an honour will it be to be thus instrumental in weakening the influence of "that wicked one, whose coming has been after the working of Satan, and who has so long deceived the nations;" for, just as this influence declines, so will pure and undefiled religion flourish, and the kingdom of Christ be advanced. Come, then, my beloved brethren, and amidst all our exertions and prayers for the conversion of the world to Christ, let us not be unmindful of those whom God has hitherto left to believe the lies of Antichrist; but rather let us give them a place in our thoughts and plans of exertion, that it may appear to our fellow men, to angels, and to God, that if they perish in their sins, their blood will not have to be required at our hands.

2. To keep ourselves free from all connexion with him. Antichrist, we have seen, is "the mystery of iniquity"—is "full of the names of blasphemy;" and, as such, is destined to an awful and perpetual destruction. How necessary, then, is it for our own safety, to obey the voice from heaven, which says—"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Whilst

we, therefore, manifest the tenderest compassion for those who are under his influence, and earnestly seek their salvation, let us have no fellowship with them in their works of iniquity, nor give the slightest countenance to them in supporting their system. In these days of Liberalism as it is called, we fear that there is danger on this subject. But do not mistake me. So far as the dictates of conscience are concerned, and the liberty to worship God according to them, we will yield to no man in maintaining that they are the birthright of all, and should be as free and unshackled as the air that we breathe. But whilst I most readily yield this liberty to all men, and claim it for myself, yet I cannot grant that any man has the right to ask me to approve of and support his errors, when these errors are ruining to the souls of men, and are denounced by the God of heaven. And if I keep myself unspotted from them, and endeavour to convince him that they are errors, and to prevent others from falling under their influence, I cannot admit that he has any just cause of complaint against me. On the contrary, it is a duty binding on all, if they would keep their conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, thus to act. Whilst you, therefore, cast a pitying eye on the adherents of the man of Sin, be careful ever to remember the character which God has given of his system; and whilst you and it continue in this world, never fail to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Above all things, attend well and constantly to the salvation of your own souls, and study to shine as lights, holding forth the word of life in all your walk and conversation.

DISCOURSE XI.

ON THE CALLING OF THE JEWS.

ROM. xi. 25, 26. Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

OF all the histories with which we can become acquainted, there is none more instructive or affecting than that of the ancient people of God. Separated from the rest of mankind by institutions which were peculiar to themselves, and blessed with the most eminent manifestations of the Divine favour, they far surpassed every other nation on earth in glory and happiness. For what nation was there that had statutes so wise or so great, or that had God so nigh unto them, as they had? To them, indeed, pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever. In the days of their prosperity Moses might well, therefore, exclaim over them—"Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency?" But as we follow them down the stream of time, what forgetfulness of God and rebellion against him do they manifest! And

what astonishing patience, mercy, and goodness, did God continue to exhibit towards them, till the cup of their iniquity was full, and neither justice nor mercy could bear with them any longer! His servants, the prophets, whom he had sent to them, they had often despised and slain; and as a last attempt to reclaim them from their downward course to perdition, he sent to them his only begotten Son; but though he came to them with nothing but tidings of peace and good-will, yet they received him not; but in the hardness and impenitence of their hearts, exclaimed—"This is the heir; come, let us kill him." And under the influence of this awful enmity against God and his well-beloved Son, they never rested till they had brought him to the cross, and imbued their hands in his blood. This awful transaction consummated their iniquity, and brought down upon them the most tremendous judgments with which a guilty people has ever been visited. For heaven as well as earth was combined against them; and when their iniquities came into remembrance before God, it was a day of vengeance, surpassed only by the terrors of the Deluge. And still, wherever we see the remains of this once flourishing nation, we see a people without a country, and, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain, suffering the vengeance of an offended, and a rejected and crucified Saviour. But in contemplating this melancholy subject, a question very naturally occurs to the mind—Are they to be for ever cast off? Or are the times of refreshing, which yet await the world, also to extend to them, that they also may be numbered amongst the trophies of Divine grace, and share in all the glory and happiness of the Millennium? Now,

the text answers this important inquiry; for it tells us that the blindness which has happened to Israel is to continue only till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel is to be saved. Let us, therefore, from these words contemplate the calling of the Jews into the Christian Church. And in doing this, let us consider, I. The present state of the Jews. II. The certainty of their conversion to the Christian faith, and their restoration to their own land in the latter days. III. The happy consequences which will proceed from it.

I. The present state of the Jews. The text leads us to consider it,

1. As a state of moral and spiritual ignorance. That it is spiritual, and not natural blindness, to which the language of the text refers, there cannot be a doubt. Indeed, the Apostle in another passage has set this point completely at rest, where he says—"Their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same vail" (allusion is here made to the vail which Moses put over his face when he came down from mount Sinai,) "untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." They loved not the truth; and in their madness and fury against Christ, opposed it to the utmost; wherefore God gave them over to a reprobate mind. And this their situation the prophet Isaiah had long before foretold. So that, when the Apostle had vainly attempted at Rome to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, he exclaimed that—"in them was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall

see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing; and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Hence, under the influence of this state of mind, the ancient Jews either completely misunderstood or perverted the plainest prophecies relating to the Saviour. And to this day their descendants still continue under its degrading and destructive influence. For, with the same malignity and obstinacy with which the ancient Jews resisted the truth in the days of Christ, the modern Jews resist the accumulated evidence which we possess of the truth of Christianity, by the fulfilment of many of its predictions, and the preservation of the system, notwithstanding all the attempts, both in ancient and modern times, which have been made to destroy it. And what, but the most wilful and obstinate blindness, can account for this part of their character? For they themselves are living witnesses to the truth of Christianity; and were there no other fact in connexion with it, on which their minds could fix, one might have thought that this would have been enough to have convinced them of their folly and wickedness in continuing to reject Jesus as the long-promised Messiah. But the common adage has been awfully fulfilled in them, that "none are so deaf as those who will not hear; nor so blind as those who will not see." As the prophet expresses it, "their eyes they have closed against the light;" and because they would have it so, God has given them up to themselves to believe a lie, and reject the truth; so that, notwithstanding all

the light of the Gospel which is shining on many of the nations, *they* still continue blind, sitting in the darkness of their unbelief, and far off from God.

2. As a state of spiritual apathy. This is another view of their situation which is strongly expressed by the language of the text. For it is not merely the understanding that is affected; the conscience and the heart have also fallen entirely under the same influence. Hence, under the personal ministry of the Saviour, though he taught as never man taught, and clearly set before them their sins, and warned them of their doom, yet they either derided him, or heard him as if they heard him not. And this feature in their character has ever since, with but few exceptions, constituted a prominent feature in the character of their descendants. Their conscience has been seared as with a hot iron, or has become hard as the adamant; so that all the common means for impressing the mind usually completely fail in their case. If they hear the Gospel at all, they regard it but as an idle tale. For its mercies they manifest no desire; and from the powers and wrath of an offended God they make no efforts to escape. Truly it may be said of them that they have no pity on themselves, and that they will not be induced to think on the evil of their ways. For nearly eighteen centuries they have been reaping, in their various generations, the fruits of their rejection of Christ; and have seen how vain a thing it is for man to attempt to contend with God; yet even now, with but few exceptions, they manifest no sense of repentance, nor inclination to return to God; but are still, after their hard and impenitent heart, treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath,

and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. The minds, indeed, seem to have been so completely abandoned of God, that they manifest a feeling of complete indifference, or deep-rooted hostility against God and his Christ; so that, like their fathers, they will not come to him that they may be saved.

3. As a state of awful judgments from God. The blindness to which we have already directed your attention, is itself to be regarded as an awful judgment from God upon them. But it is only a part of the long list of calamities which have come upon them as outcasts from his favour. For as they rejected the Prince of life, and prayed that his blood might be upon them and upon their children, so God has granted them their request, and has visited them with calamities such as have befallen no other nation on the face of the earth. In the days of their obedience to God and faithfulness in his covenant, he rejoiced over them to do them good, and to multiply them; but ever since they sealed up their iniquity by their rejection of the Saviour, in conformity with the prediction of Moses he has rejoiced over them to destroy them, and to bring them to nought; so that they have been banished from the soil of their ancestors, and have been driven like vagabonds to and fro upon the face of the whole earth, and have become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations. Of all the people, indeed, who dwell on the face of the earth, none have been so universally despised and hated, and none more grievously oppressed and persecuted. Christian, Pagan, and Mahommedan nations, though agreeing almost about nothing, have nevertheless cordially united in the most sanguinary measures of violence against them. There is no

country, indeed, from which, at one period or another, they have not been expelled; and even to this day they continue not only a distinct, but a persecuted people wherever we find them. And all this is to be regarded, during the long period which has passed over them in their outcast condition, as part of the blindness which has happened unto them. Whatever may be said of some sinners finding the way of transgression easy and pleasing, this cannot be affirmed of the Jews. For since God cast them off, their path has been in darkness; and wherever they have fled, they have found themselves pursued by the frowns and judgments of an offended God. And still their calamities are not ended. But, blessed be God, we have the clearest evidence for believing that they will yet come to an end. For, heinous though their transgressions have been, yet "the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin;" and whenever it is applied to their souls, it will purify them from their deepest stains. And that it will be applied, the declarations of Scripture place beyond all doubt; for the blindness which has happened to them is to continue only till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel is to be saved.

Let us therefore consider,

II. The certainty of their conversion to the Christian faith, and restoration to their own land in the latter days. In reference to many of the prophecies relating to the Jews, it may be remarked, that there are two distinct events which must be carefully kept in mind in order that we may rightly understand them. The former is the Babylonish captivity, and their return from it in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah: the latter is their general dispersion at the destruction

of Jerusalem, in consequence of their rejection of the Gospel, and their conversion to the Christian faith, and return to their own land in the latter days. In the study of the prophecies, also, which relate to these two events, it requires very often a nice degree of discrimination in order to ascertain with accuracy to which of them they refer. In the following brief outline, however, which we shall give of them, we shall endeavour carefully to avoid all which seem even doubtful, and shall adduce only those which seem of certain application to the object which we have in view.

Now, in searching the Scriptures on this point, we find, that as far back as the days of Moses, God seems to have communicated to them the fullest information on this subject. Thus Moses, under the guidance of the spirit of prophecy, clearly foretold their future defection from the Lord their God, and fully enumerated the evils, which, in consequence of this, have come upon them. But, guided by the same influence, he tells them—"And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and will have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And if any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he

fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers, &c." Deut. xxx. 1–5. Now, in reference to this prophecy it may be remarked, that the dispersion which it describes is too extensive to admit of a fulfilment in the Babylonish captivity; and there seems to be no other event to which it can refer but their present state and future call into the Christian Church. The prophet Isaiah, too, seems to have had the clearest intimation of this event. For, referring to New Testament times, he says, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles look, and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four quarters of the earth." Is. xi. 10–12. The prophet Ezekiel also, in the 36th and following chapters of his prophecies, refers in the clearest manner to the same event; whilst the prophet Zechariah is so explicit, that it is impossible his meaning can be mistaken. "And I will pour," says God, "upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness

for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Zech. xii. 10. This prophecy, you perceive, points out not only the dispositions or frame of mind with which they will return to God, but the cause of this heartfelt distress, namely, the crucifixion and rejection of Christ. For they are to look upon him whom they have pierced: thus confining its application entirely to New Testament times. To these Old Testament prophecies may be added several references to the same subject which are found in the New Testament; and concerning all such allusions, as they were written long after the close of Old Testament prophecy, there can be no doubt of their proper application.

The first of these references seems to be that of our Lord himself, when referring to the calamities which were to befall the Jews at, and subsequent to, the destruction of Jerusalem. "And they"—that is, the Jews—"shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 24. The form of this declaration evidently leads us to conclude, that whenever the times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled, Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles, and the Jews shall be again restored to it. But by far the fullest and clearest revelation of God's purpose on this subject, is that which is contained in the chapter from which we have selected the text. And so full and distinct is this, that no candid mind can rise from the perusal of it without being convinced that the unbelief of the Jews will be removed, and that they will be again restored to the privileges of the Church, and become fellow-heirs with the Gentiles of

the inheritance of the saints in light. The blindness which has befallen them is not to last for ever, but only till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in—that is, till the great mass of the Gentile nations shall be brought to embrace the Gospel; and whenever this event shall have taken place, their blindness will be removed, and, with the bitterness of grief which a parent feels for the death of his first-born, they will look upon him whom their fathers rejected and slew, and will come and put their trust under the shadow of his wings. The time when they will do this seems to be the time when they will return to their own land; or, as the prophet Isaiah has expressed it, when God "shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four quarters of the earth;" and when he will "say to the north give up, and to the south keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." Thus, through the gracious influence of the Deliverer who has come out of Zion, shall ungodliness be turned away from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved; and then shall be fulfilled that striking prophecy of Isaiah—"and they," that is, the Gentiles, "shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." Is. lxvi. 20. Let us now contemplate,

III. The happy consequences which will proceed from it.

1. An objection which has been long urged against Christianity will be entirely removed. Infidels of every age have never failed to avail themselves of the infidelity of the Jews in order that they might gain something like support to their unholy cause; and on some weak minds it is possible that this objection may have had an unfavourable influence. But weak they must be who do not see through this sophistry; for their infidelity, in place of being an objection against the truth of Christianity, when fairly considered can appear in no other light than as a strong corroborative testimony to it. For, though it was of the deepest malignity, and led them to do every thing against Christ and his followers which malice could suggest and power could execute, yet they could not hinder the triumphs of the cross, nor gainsay the statements of the Apostles. Yea, even when they were in the very height of their madness and impiety against Christ, as they saw him expire on the cross, it had no other effect on the Roman centurion and his band of soldiers, when "they saw the earthquake, and those things that were done," than to lead them to be greatly afraid, and openly at the very foot of the cross to declare—"truly this was the Son of God." The Apostles also no sooner began to preach Christ to the assembled multitudes in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, than thousands of them were pricked in their heart, and led to believe in him. The same thing, too, happened frequently afterwards, notwithstanding all the malice, and vigilance, and power of the rulers. The great body of the people, however, doubtless continued impenitent, and added to the sin of the crucifixion of the Lord of glory the additional crime of forbidding the Apostles to preach

to the Gentiles, that they might be saved; till at last they brought down upon them the long restrained, but terrible manifestations of the wrath of an offended God, and an insulted and rejected Saviour. Ever since that awful event their descendants have been scattered over the face of the earth; and, though unbelievers, are yet living witnesses to the truth of the Gospel. But, granting to the infidel all the aid which he can derive from their infidelity to his miserable cause, when the blindness which has happened to them shall have been removed, and they shall have been added to the Christian Church, like his many other refuges of lies, this also shall be swept away, and leave him as a monster among the nations, and hastening to swift and irremediable destruction. The evidence, then, in favour of the truth of Christianity will appear so strong and clear, that not a shadow of objection will remain to be brought against it, but that which the enmity of the heart that refuses to be reconciled to God may suggest; and this cannot but be regarded in the light of a glorious triumph.

2. It will have a powerful effect in elevating the tone of piety in the Gentile Churches. That the ingathering of the Jews is to have this happy effect, there cannot be a doubt; for it is expressly stated that it is to be "as life from the dead." The event itself will be such a proof of the efficacy of Divine grace, and of the faithfulness, power, glory, and presence of Christ in his Church—and the various circumstances with which it will be accompanied will be of so marked and glorious a character, that the attention of all will be arrested by them; so that a fresh and universal stimulus will thereby be given to increasing devoted-

ness and delight in the service of Christ. The Jews themselves, also, will not only have become living examples of the efficacy of his grace; they will strive to outstrip the Gentile converts in their knowledge and zeal for his glory. Like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, wherever they may be at the time, they will begin to preach the faith which they formerly sought to destroy. And that God designs to make great use of them in the completion of the triumphs of the Gospel upon the earth, seems very evident from various passages in the sacred Scriptures. Thus, says he by the prophet Isaiah—"I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." Is. lxvi. 19. "And the remnant of Jacob," says the prophet Micah also, "shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." Mic. v. 7. The very circumstance, too, of their being scattered over the face of the earth, will give them many peculiar advantages in assisting the Gentile Churches in completing the conquest of the world to Christ. And when their present degraded character shall be changed into that of the Missionaries of the cross; and when they, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, shall come up to the help of the Lord against the last struggles of the God of this world to retain his dominion over the minds of men, and shall preach Christ and him crucified—no longer a stumbling block to them, but the wisdom of God, and the power of God to salvation

—we may rest assured that the confidence of all the followers of Christ will be greatly invigorated; their love to him and to one another will be greatly increased; their songs of salvation will abound; and each in exalted joy and thanksgiving will be ready to say, "Behold what God hath wrought."

3. It will be the fulfilment of the last part of prophecy relating to the introduction of the Millennium. When a traveller, after a long and fatiguing journey, comes to obtain a near and full view of the place whither he is going, every step that he afterwards takes seems perceptibly to tell in lessening the distance in his view. And just so will it be with the Church, when the descendants of Abraham, the friend of God, shall be numbered among the followers of the Lamb. For though there may be some in many lands who may even then be ignorant, and indifferent about the grace of God, yet when "all Israel" shall be numbered amongst the saved, we know that "the fulness of the Gentiles" shall have come in, and that the Church will then have a full view of the peace, the purity, and the happiness of the Millennium. The effusions of the Spirit will then be very great—Antichrist shall have been completely destroyed—and the various errors which have corrupted and defaced the beauty of the Church shall then have been entirely removed. And the probability is, that between the conversion of the Jews and the universal triumphs of the Gospel, the period will be very short; whilst the interval will be filled up with so many glorious displays of Divine grace, that every heart will be filled with rapture; and in the midst of this universal joy, soon will glad voices from east to west, and from north to

south be heard, proclaiming—"the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." And then, throughout the long period of a thousand years, shall Satan no more be permitted to deceive the nations; and then, in all lands, shall be more than realized the many happy scenes which we have endeavoured to describe to you as constituting the glory and felicity of the Millennial age.

In closing this subject, permit me,

1. To exhort you to take the deepest interest in the conversion of the Jews. Preserved as they have been —doubtless by special Divine interposition—from being blended with the people amongst whom they have been scattered, wherever we behold them we should regard them as yet destined to be amongst the brightest triumphs of the Redeemer. In place of contemplating them with indifference, and continuing to follow them with scorn and contempt, it is indeed high time for Christian nations to regard them with Christian piety, and endeavour to convince them of their errors, and win them to Christ. For "if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness." Should not this circumstance, therefore, lead us to long for their conversion, and to endeavour in the use of all the appointed means, and looking for the blessing of God to accompany them, to bring it about. And though their infidelity has been of long continuance and of a very aggravated character, yet Divine grace can easily remove it. With the view, also, of encouraging us in the use of means for their conversion, God has declared, in the most express terms, that

he will remove it, and again graft them into his Church. Whilst we therefore think of, and pray for, those who are sitting in the darkness of heathenism, let us not be unmindful of the outcasts of Israel. The time to favour them will assuredly come, and may not be far distant, when their blindness will be taken away, and a heart be given to them to know the Lord. In hastening on, also, the conversion of the Jews, we are only thereby approaching nearer and nearer the universal conversion of the Lord to Christ. For the latter can never take place without the former ; and as it is first in the order of time, we should certainly not let it be last in order of our operations or prayers. Like Paul, therefore, let us all say—"Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved." And may God soon grant them "repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who have been taken captive by him at his will."

2. Let the impenitent be exhorted impartially to consider the case of the Jews. In reviewing their early history, we find that there was no nation on the face of the earth which was so exalted in the enjoyment of religious privileges, or so richly blessed with the bounties of Providence. But how changed, alas! is their situation now! Visited by the most tremendous judgments with which a guilty people have ever been afflicted, and driven at last from the land of their fathers, they continue to this day the monuments of the awful displeasure of God; and proclaim to the world what a fearful thing it is to despise Christ and reject his Gospel. Great, too, as their calamities have been in this world, they are nothing

when contrasted with the suffering of the wrath of God and the Lamb in the world to come; for there it is wrath unmixed with mercy, and it is never to come to an end. Be entreated, then, my fellow dying sinners, to take warning by them, and no longer harden your hearts against Christ. For their case affectingly tells all to whom the Gospel is sent, that in rejecting it we are thereby turning the infinite mercy of the Saviour into infinite wrath; and in losing an interest in his love, are only falling into the unquenchable flames which are "prepared for the Devil and his angels." O be not ye, therefore, any longer slow of heart to believe the things that are spoken to you concerning Jesus of Nazareth. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And, as you know not what a day may bring forth, hasten, O hasten to the Saviour *now*, lest his wrath be kindled against you, and you perish in an hour when ye think not of it.

DISCOURSE XII.

ON THE TIME OF THE COMMENCEMENT, AND THE DURATION OF THE MILLENNIUM.

REV. xx. 1—3. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.

IN our preceding discourses on the subject of the Millennium, we have directed your attention to all its prominent features—have pointed out the vast change which is to take place in the structure of society, in the sentiments and character of mankind, and in the intercourse of nations—and have endeavoured to establish the certainty of two great events which are still future; namely, "The destruction of Antichrist, and the calling of the Jews into the Christian Church;" events which are most intimately connected with the introduction of the Millennium—and, as a concluding discourse to the whole, we come on the present occasion to consider the period of its commencement and the extent of its duration.

Now, in reference to this part of the subject, we remark, that a moment's reflection is enough to convince

us that there can be no Millennium so long as Satan is permitted to exercise his influence on mankind. For no sooner would one system of iniquity be overthrown, and men be rescued from it, than he would devise another, and seek thereby to deceive and ruin the soul. For his enmity to God and the Saviour is such as can never be subdued, and whilst he has an opportunity of manifesting it he will never cease to oppose the progress of the Gospel and the salvation of man. In order, therefore, that the Gospel may have free course, and the Spirit of God an unrestrained influence over the minds of men, it is absolutely necessary that Satan should be deprived of his influence over them, and from regaining it when lost. And that the purposes of God are such as to lead us to anticipate that this will be the case, the language of the text furnishes us with the most satisfactory evidence; and whenever this description shall have been fulfilled, the purity, peace, and happiness of the Millennium will doubtless universally prevail. In reference to prophecy, however, it may be remarked that, with but very few exceptions, there is no circumstance in connection with it which is so indefinitely pointed out as the exact time of its fulfilment. The future, indeed, is known only to God, except in so far as he has been pleased to lift up the vail which conceals it from our view; and, excepting the cases in which he has done so, it becomes us never to lose sight of the declaration of our Lord to his disciples—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Secret things, indeed, belong unto the Lord our God, but unto us and our children those things only which are revealed. But whilst we

would inculcate this as the state of mind necessary to the proper study of prophecy, yet it nevertheless becomes us to improve to the utmost whatever notices God has been pleased to give us on this subject in the revelation of his will: and though we may not be able even with these to point out the day or the year in which this event will assuredly take place, yet these notices, we apprehend, are sufficiently explicit to enable us to come very near what is likely to be the truth. In attempting, therefore, to ascertain the period in question, it is necessary that we should present these before you.

In reference to this point, therefore, let it be remarked, that we have a definite measure of time given us during which Antichrist is to hold his influence over the minds of men, and that at the close of this period of time the kingdom of Christ is represented as being universally established in all its power and glory. Thus it is stated, that "the holy city shall be trodden under foot forty and two months." "The witnesses of Jesus shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." Rev. xi. 3. "The woman who brought forth the man child is to be cherished in the wilderness for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the Serpent." Rev. xii. 14. "And to the Beast with seven heads and ten horns, which had a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, power is given to continue forty and two months." Rev. xiii. 1—5. Now, in reference to these different descriptions of time, it may be remarked that there is a perfect agreement. For "the time, and times, and half a time," correspond with three years and a half, which are exactly equal to

"forty and two months;" which again, as they are lunar months of thirty days each, are exactly equal to twelve hundred and sixty days. By the term "days," however, it is universally admitted that we are to understand *years*, this being a mode of stating time peculiar to the prophets; and hence a day in their phraseology is equal to a year in the common acceptation of the term. By these twelve hundred and sixty days we are then to understand so many years, during which the kingdom of Antichrist is to exist, and exert its destructive sway over the souls of men. During the same period, too, we observe that the pure Church of Christ, which is here described as "the holy city, and the woman who brought forth the man child," is represented as being in a harassed, distressed, and desolate condition; and the faithful ministers of the Gospel as labouring under many discouragements, and amid great opposition. At the conclusion of this period, however, the whole scene is represented as changing; for it is then that "the Beast is to be taken, and the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, and are to be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." And no sooner is this represented as being done, than "an angel, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, descends, and lays hold of the old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and binds him, and casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him, that he may no more go out to deceive the nations for a thousand years;" and whenever this is done, then, and only then, is the commencement of the Millennium.

But, in order that we may know when we may expect all this to happen, it is absolutely necessary that

we should ascertain with accuracy the date of the rise of Antichrist—that is, the commencement of his reign. As he came not into existence, however, all at once, nor on a sudden, it is difficult to do this with a satisfactory measure of precision. As the subject is confessedly one of great interest, it is well worthy, however, of a patient and careful investigation. Now, in searching the records of Ecclesiastical history in order to ascertain this point, we learn that the Bishop of Rome had, as early as the third century, greatly departed from the purity of the faith, and had begun to assume a superior degree of importance among the Christian Churches. For a long period, however, he was keenly opposed in all his attempts and artifices to gain the title, and to exert the power, of "Universal Bishop" of the Church, by the Bishop of Constantinople, who claimed this title as his peculiar prerogative. At the beginning, however, of the seventh century, it is related of Boniface III. that he induced Phocas, who was then Roman emperor, and one of the most despicable tyrants who ever swayed a sceptre, and who waded to the imperial throne through the blood of the emperor Mauritius, to take from the Bishop of Constantinople, and confer upon the Roman pontiff the title to which we have here referred. This event is said to have taken place in the six hundredth and sixth year of the Christian era. Now, it was then that the Bishop of Rome began to exercise that lordly power over the whole Church which has ever since constituted one of the most prominent features of the great Antichrist. If we then take this period as the date of his commencement, and add to it the twelve hundred and sixty years which the Scriptures

assign as the period of his duration, it will bring the close of his dominion to happen in A. D. 1866, about thirty-one years hence; after which, admitting this calculation to be correct, the prophecy of the text should be fulfilled and the Millennium commence. And it is but right in me to state, that a considerable number of the most eminent writers on Christian prophecy are of this opinion. But when we come to take a just view of the present state of the Church and of the world, and form an accurate estimate of what yet remains to be done in the way of preaching the Gospel and circulating the Scriptures in heathen countries, and of the vast changes which must take place in both in order to prepare them for the Millennium, we shall feel ourselves constrained, I fear, however reluctantly, to hesitate about placing implicit reliance on this calculation. And so far as my own views are concerned, I am disposed to place more confidence on another mode of calculation, which I shall now state to you.

Though the exaltation of the Bishop of Rome to the title and jurisdiction of the universal Bishop of the Church may be justly considered to have conferred on him the highest *ecclesiastical* authority that he ever possessed, and to have led the way to all his subsequent usurpations and tyranny, yet it was not till A. D. 754 or '55 that he was raised to the rank of a temporal prince. The way, also, in which he obtained this fresh accession to his dignity is not unworthy of notice. Pepin, who was mayor of the palace to Childeric III. king of France, having formed the ambitious and iniquitous design of dethroning his master and sovereign, and stepping into his place, applied to

the Pope for his sanction and assistance in carrying it into execution. As the Pope felt the need of some farther assistance than he then possessed in order to reach the object of his highest ambition; and as he thought this a favourable opportunity of securing it, in despite of all regard either to justice or religion; he very readily acquiesced in the designs of this usurper —dissolved the obligation of the oath of fidelity and allegiance which Pepin had sworn to Childeric, and anointed and crowned him king; and it was in consequence of this valuable piece of service which he performed for him that Pepin raised him to a place among the kings of the earth. As he had began, however, between A. D. 720 and 730 to thunder out his anathemas against the rulers of the earth, the various powers of the system were then doubtless in operation; and it is from this date that we are disposed to calculate the commencement of his reign. Now, if we add the twelve hundred and sixty years to this date, it will bring the conclusion of his existence somewhere about A. D. 1980. And if we look at the amazing change which is to take place, in the progress of knowledge, and the views and characters of mankind, before the Millennium can exist, we apprehend that the period between this and then is short enough, even admitting the superior effusions of the Holy Spirit in order to effect it. If, then, we state, as the amount of the information which we can obtain on this point from the word of God, that Antichrist is likely to be completely destroyed about one hundred and forty-five years hence, I am led to think, after a careful consideration of the subject, that this calculation will be found to be about right. And if we allow the twenty years fol-

lowing to be occupied in the restoration of the Jews to the Church and to their own land, and in the conversion of those parts of the heathen world which may then remain strangers to the Gospel, this will bring us down to the seven thousandth year of the world, which I am disposed to regard as the period allotted by God for the Millennium. Between this and then, however, the history of the world and the Church is likely, we apprehend, to exhibit a succession of events more glorious in themselves, and happy in their consequences, than have yet taken place since the Saviour left the earth and ascended his throne in the heavens. The days of apathy and lukewarmness among the genuine disciples of Christ are rapidly coming to an end; and between this and the Millennial age they will feel themselves impelled, both by the dispensations of Providence and the leadings of the Spirit of God, to greater activity and zeal than they have ever yet manifested; and during a great portion of the intervening time, the path of the Church will doubtless be like that of the sun, shining brighter and brighter, till it reach the noontide splendour of the cloudless days of the Millennium.

In addition to the time of its commencement, we propose to consider,

II. The period of its duration. On this part of the subject we can obtain no definite information from the Old Testament; for though it is referred to, yet there are no definite terms used in connexion with it which can enable us to form any idea of the extent of its duration. Thus, when the prophet Isaiah refers to it in connexion with the restoration of Jerusalem, his language is—"whereas thou hast been forsaken, and

hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." In this passage, the word "eternal" is evidently synonymous with "many generations," which mean only a long period, the duration of which, from this phraseology, cannot be exactly ascertained. But, leaving the Old Testament, as not designed to afford us any light on this point, let us attend to the declarations of the New. Now, in attending to these, we find that the period of a thousand years is repeatedly assigned as the extent of this happy and glorious state of the Church. This, we perceive, is the case in the text and following verses. But here a question has arisen, which, like almost every thing else, has given rise to a diversity of opinions; namely: are these years to be computed as prophetical years—that is, every day standing for a thousand years; or are they to be understood according to the common acceptation of the term? If they are to be understood according to the former opinion, the Millennium will exist through no less a period than three hundred and sixty-five thousand years. But to this mode of calculation many serious and weighty objections may easily be stated. The period itself, it may be remarked, is so vast, that we cannot form a definite idea of it. It does not seem to harmonize with the other parts of the Divine economy concerning our world, so far as it is explained to us. It does not seem to agree with the feelings which the study and belief of the sacred Scriptures naturally call forth in our minds, as it puts the resurrection and the judgment at too great a distance. And there does not seem to be a passage, either in the Old Testament or New, in which the term "year" can be proved to

mean any thing else than the period which is occupied in the earth's performing a revolution in its orbit, or circuit round the sun. For these, and other reasons which might be stated, we are therefore disposed to regard this opinion as incorrect, and unworthy of serious notice; and to believe that the term "a thousand years" is to be understood in its literal and common acceptation. As the progress of the Church, however, towards the Millennium will doubtless be gradual, and its actual commencement probably so imperceptible that it will be difficult even for those who may have the happiness to see and enjoy it precisely to fix upon the day, or the month, or the year when it began, so will also be its close. And, come when it may, we may rest assured that not a day of this long-promised happiness will be wanting to the Church; for faithful is he who has promised it, and he will perform all his pleasure. And what a revenue of glory will then redound to the wisdom of the Father, the love of the Son, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, for having devised and consummated the plan of redemption! And how vast beyond all calculation will be the number of the saved, when, throughout a thousand years of nothing but peace and good-will amongst men, "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the channel of the sea; and the Spirit shall be poured out as floods on the dry ground." How great, also, will be the devotedness of the soul to God —how pure its joys—and how easy its transition from earth to heaven; for the eminent degree of holiness which it will then attain, will communicate to it such an eminent degree of meetness for heaven as will raise it effectually above the fears of death, and impart to it a longing

for the unveiled glory and perfect blessedness of the presence of God and the Lamb. And who is there, when reflecting on these things, that does not rejoice as he looks forward to the future history of the Church and the world, and is not ready to pour out the full tide of his desires and aspirations, and say—"come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly, and thus reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, that all nations may be blessed in thee, and all in their songs of praise proclaim thee blessed!"

In closing these discourses, therefore, on this sublimely interesting subject, permit me, my dear brethren,

1. To exhort you to entertain a firm belief of the Millennium. For, however true the remark may be, when applied to some things, that they are merely visionary, and too good to be true, it cannot apply to this; for we have the testimony of Him who cannot lie, and who bringeth to pass all things according to the council of his own will, that, for a thousand years, Satan shall not be permitted to deceive the nations, and that all the kingdoms of this world shall continue throughout that period the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. Whatever doubt may therefore have arisen in your minds as to the accuracy of any of the illustrations of it which we have presented to you, we entreat you to entertain no doubt of the thing itself. For the work is not man's, but God's; and to doubt it, is to call in question either his veracity, or power, or the efficacy of the blood of Christ, or of the work of the Holy Spirit. And when we connect the work, great as it is, with the agency which is engaged to bring it to pass, who can reasonably doubt its practi-

cability? For is there, or can there be, any thing too hard for the Lord? The conversion of a single soul settles, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the practicability of the conversion of a multitude. For Divine agency is just as necessary in the one case as it is in the other; and to Omnipotence there is nothing great or small. When we, therefore, look at the vastness of the undertaking of converting the world to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel, let not unbelief lead us to doubt it; for it is not by human might, nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts, that it will be accomplished. And when you look at the opposing difficulties in the way, in the language of the prophet you may well say—"who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it!" Yes, before the agency of the Spirit every thing will give way; and when the hearts of all shall have felt his influence, their tongues will not be silent in the praise of him who hath redeemed them to God by his blood. Let us all, therefore, endeavour to regard the Millennium just as much in the light of a certainty as if it had already taken place; for faithful is he who hath promised it, who also will bring it to pass.

2. Never forget that you have some important part of the exertions necessary to introduce it allotted to you. As the Millennial glory and happiness of the Church are nothing but the universal diffusion of the Gospel, and the belief and practice of it in spirit and in truth; and as the instrumentality of the people of God is to be used in connexion with the agency of the Spirit in accomplishing this, so there is not one of the

household of faith who may not, and who should not, co-operate in bringing it about. And it is a remark that never should be lost sight of, that example is always more powerful than precept. Now, in connexion with the Millennium, and as having a most important bearing on its introduction, every believer in Jesus should endeavour to attain as great a measure of conformity to him, and to manifest on all occasions as much of the spirit of the Gospel as possible. And of all the ways in which it may be done, this will always be found the most effectual for shutting the mouths of gainsayers, and for leading them to be followers of us as we are of Christ. Another happy effect which it will have, will be, that it will elevate the tone of piety in all our brethren around us. For, "as iron sharpeneth iron, so does the face of a man his friend;" and thus it will help on the Church to the eminent degree of holiness, devotedness, and happiness, for which it will be distinguished during the Millennial age. Constantly seek, then, my beloved brethren, the attainment of an eminent degree of piety. In place of resting satisfied with present attainments, forget them, and reach forth to those that are still before, and endeavour to obtain a glimpse of the glory and happiness of that delightful age. Take, also, the deepest interest in every thing connected with the prosperity of the Church, and the advancement of pure and undefiled religion over the world; for on you, as well as others, devolves the important and delightful duty of sending the Gospel even to the ends of the earth. And just in proportion as this duty is faithfully regarded by every individual member of the Church, so will the kingdom of our Lord be advanced,

and the latter day glory of the world be brought near.

And to the youth around me, who may be preparing to occupy important spheres either in the world or in the Church, permit me, in connexion with this subject, to say—On you, my young friends, will soon devolve an important share in the exertions which are necessary to carry on the Church to her Millennial glory. Be entreated, then, early to begin to think about it, and to cultivate a spirit of elevated and active piety, and of entire consecration of all you are, and have, to the cause of the Redeemer and the best interests of man. The future dispensations of Providence, and the Spirit of God, will not suffer you, we feel persuaded, if you have days to live, to be so indolent and indifferent in the cause of Christ as your fathers have been. Make up your minds, therefore, in a humble dependence on Divine aid, to a life of vigorous exertion in the cause of Christ. And if after mature deliberation, and many prayers to God for direction and qualifying grace, you are led to consecrate yourselves to his service, either among the Churches at home or among the heathen abroad, you may rejoice in your choice, for it is the most noble which any mind can make; and in the prosecution of it, you will find no reason to envy either conquerors their fame, or kings their thrones; for your record will be on high, and your crown will be an imperishable one, to be worn for ever in the palace of God above. So far, therefore, as you are concerned, yours be the glory in future life to teach the ignorant the way to everlasting life—to pour the balm of heavenly consolation into the afflicted soul—to alleviate the sorrows

of the wretched—and to carry with you to heaven as many immortal souls as you can possibly rescue from the misery of guilt and the slavery of sin. And so far as opportunities of extensive and honourable usefulness are concerned, the world has never hitherto presented so many as are opening on the present age. From every quarter, indeed, of the heathen world, the supplicating cry, borne on the wings of heaven across the billows of the deep, may be heard—"Come over, and help us." It is the supplication of at least six hundred millions of our fellow-men, sunk in all the wretchedness of heathenism here, and exposed to all the woes of eternal destruction hereafter. And shall it be—can it be disregarded? Love to the Saviour who has redeemed us, as well as compassion for our brethren in distress, answer—No; it cannot—it shall not be. But it is to the *youth* that the Churches must look to carry this reply into execution. And may God, in mercy to the heathen, dispose many a heart among the youth of this happy land to make the necessary sacrifices in the way of going far hence to the Gentiles, and richly endow them with the gifts of his holy spirit, that they may turn many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

But there is another class of my audience whose services are so important, in connexion with the cause of Christ, that it must plead my apology for particularly addressing them on this subject. And here, I remark, that I refer to Christian parents. The duties binding on religious parents have been at all times of the most momentous character; but, without any tendency to exaggeration, it may be stated, that at no previous period has their faithful discharge been of

equal importance for securing the best interests of men as it is at the present day. If ever it was necessary, therefore, for parents to lay these duties to heart, and to endeavour faithfully and successfully to perform them, it is so especially now; for the period is rapidly approaching, when, amidst the fearful troubles which are coming on the nations, the genuine disciples of Christ alone will be safe; and when the false glare which has been thrown around the vanities of this perishing world shall be removed, and every thing will appear in its true light, and be estimated as it bears on the soul and eternity. The calls, also, for assistance and co-operation with God in extending the kingdom of Christ, are already exceedingly great, and will every year increase till *the earth* shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Be entreated, then, to endeavour to prepare your children for occupying a conspicuous place in the future exertions of the Church. And for this purpose study to prevent them from forming erroneous views of this world—its pursuits, its wealth, its honours, and its pleasures; and endeavour to impress their minds with just views of the vast importance of personal piety—to embue them with an eminent measure of the spirit of the Gospel; and to lead them, above all things, to seek their honour and glory, both here and hereafter, in winning souls to Christ. And what an honour will it be to be the instruments of thus rearing those, whose exertions may have an important influence in introducing the glory of the latter days! For though your eyes may not see this on earth, yet the eyes of your children or grand children are likely to see at least its beginning. Let it be your concern, therefore, to endeavour to train them up for it, by early instilling into

their minds correct views of it, and by leading them to look forward to it with delight, and to labour and to pray for its introduction.

And now, in closing this interesting, and on many accounts delightful subject, let it have the happy effect on us all of leading us with greater earnestness to seek after the glory and happiness of heaven; and there, though we may not be allowed to see the Millennium on earth, yet, amidst the ecstasy of its blessedness, we shall become fully acquainted with the gradual advancement of the Church towards it—with its purity and happiness whilst it lasts; and for interminable ages after it is past, yea, after the earth itself shall have been burnt up, we shall exult in the enjoyment of felicity, such as was never tasted here—that shall also be without intermission—and that shall know no end. May God, in his rich mercy, prepare us all for it; and to his name be all the praise.

THE END.

ROBERT CARTER,

112 CANAL STREET, NEW-YORK,

Has lately published the following Works:

SYMINGTON ON THE ATONEMENT AND INTERCESSION OF JESUS CHRIST. 400 pp. 12mo.

OUR PROTESTANT FOREFATHERS. By W. S. Gilly, Prebendary of Durham, from the Twelth London Edition.

MODERN ACCOMPLISHMENTS, OR THE MARCH OF INTELLECT, By Miss Catharine Sinclair, 350 pp. 12mo. "This work is written by Miss Sinclair, the accomplished daughter of the celebrated Sir John Sinclair, and was revised by that great and good man, who was the ornament of Scotland. It exhibits one of the loftiest triumphs of an accomplished, lovely female mind. It is impossible to say whether we may admire most her elegance, taste, fashion, or her noble and enlightened Christianity. This is a successful attempt to to make the real scenes of a religious life acceptable to youthful readers, and to lead them away from the mere earthliness of the mere fiction, and the worldly novel, to what is pure, lovely, real, and eternal.

W. C. B."

R. C. is also Agent for the Presbyterian Tracts, orders for which are thankfully received and promptly attended to.

NEW-YORK:
Printed by SCATCHERD & ADAMS,
No. 38 Gold-street.

BT
890

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 794 339 2